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Vol. 8

Cover A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE#1

OF 6

IT ALL STARTS
HERE!



J.T. KRUL
RAFFAELLE FORTÉ
MARK ROSLAN
VALENTINA TADDEO
ZEN

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VOL. 8

COVER B

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MICHAEL
TURNER

Relax

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J.T. KRAUL
script

RAFFAELE FORTÉ
pencils

MARK ROSLAN
digital inks

VALENTINA TRODD
colors

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lettering

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ISSUE 1 OF 6

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MORE THAN A NAME.
MORE THAN A WORD.
IT IS A CALLING.
A WAY OF LIFE.

AN INNER LIGHT PROJECTING
POWER, STRENGTH, AND
MOST OF ALL, HONOR.

FOR EONS, GRACE HAS BEEN
CHARGED WITH THE DUTY
OF PROTECTING MAGIC.

IN ANCIENT TIMES, IT FELL TO HER
TO STAND AGAINST THE DARKER
FORCES SEEKING TO USE THE
UNIVERSAL ENERGY FOR GREAT
AND TERRIBLE PURPOSES.

WHEN THE LIGHT DIED,
MAGIC ALL BUT FADED FROM
THE WORLD. GRACE WORKED
TO PROTECT THE REMAINING
EMBERS OF MAGIC IN THE
MYSTICAL REALM OF THE
EVERLANDS, UNTIL SHE WAS
ABLE TO SEE ITS POWER
RESTORED IN FULL AT THE
HANDS OF THE *SAMUSARA*,
THE BRINGER OF LIGHT.

STILL, EVIL REMAINS, BOTH IN
THE FORM OF OLD ADVERSARIES
RETURNED AND A NEW WORLD
THAT HAS FORGOTTEN WHAT
TRUE POWER REALLY EXISTS
IN THE UNIVERSE.

BUT THEY
SHALL LEARN...



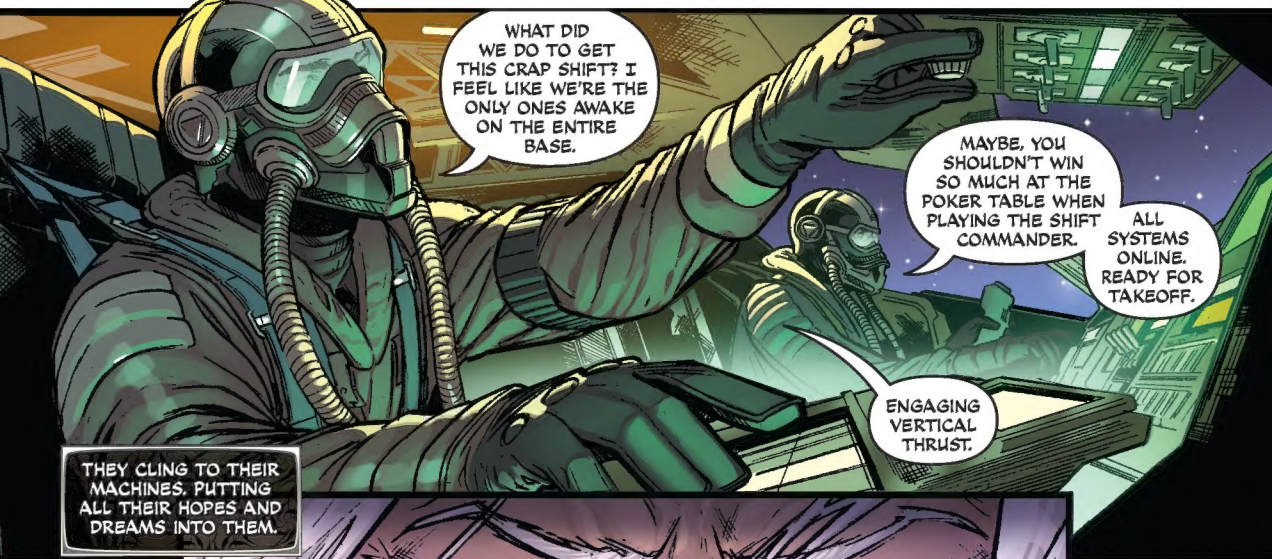


U.S. AIRBASE, MONTANA.
THE YEAR 2213.

OVERLOAD
FEEDBACK
SENSOR.

NEGATIVE.

LOOK AT THEM. THINKING
THEY ARE SAFE. PROTECTED
BY THE FAINTEST SENSE OF
POWER THEY POSSSS.



WHAT DID
WE DO TO GET
THIS CRAP SHIFT? I
FEEL LIKE WE'RE THE
ONLY ONES AWAKE
ON THE ENTIRE
BASE.

MAYBE, YOU
SHOULDN'T WIN
SO MUCH AT THE
POKER TABLE WHEN
PLAYING THE SHIFT
COMMANDER.

ALL
SYSTEMS
ONLINE.
READY FOR
TAKEOFF.

ENGAGING
VERTICAL
THRUST.

THEY CLING TO THEIR
MACHINES, PUTTING
ALL THEIR HOPES AND
DREAMS INTO THEM.

HARD TO BLAME THEM.
I TOO USED TO THINK I
COULD FIND WHAT I WAS
LOOKING FOR THROUGH
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

AND WHAT
KIND OF RECON ARE
WE SUPPOSED TO DO,
IF THEY WON'T EVEN
TELL US WHAT WE'RE
LOOKING FOR?

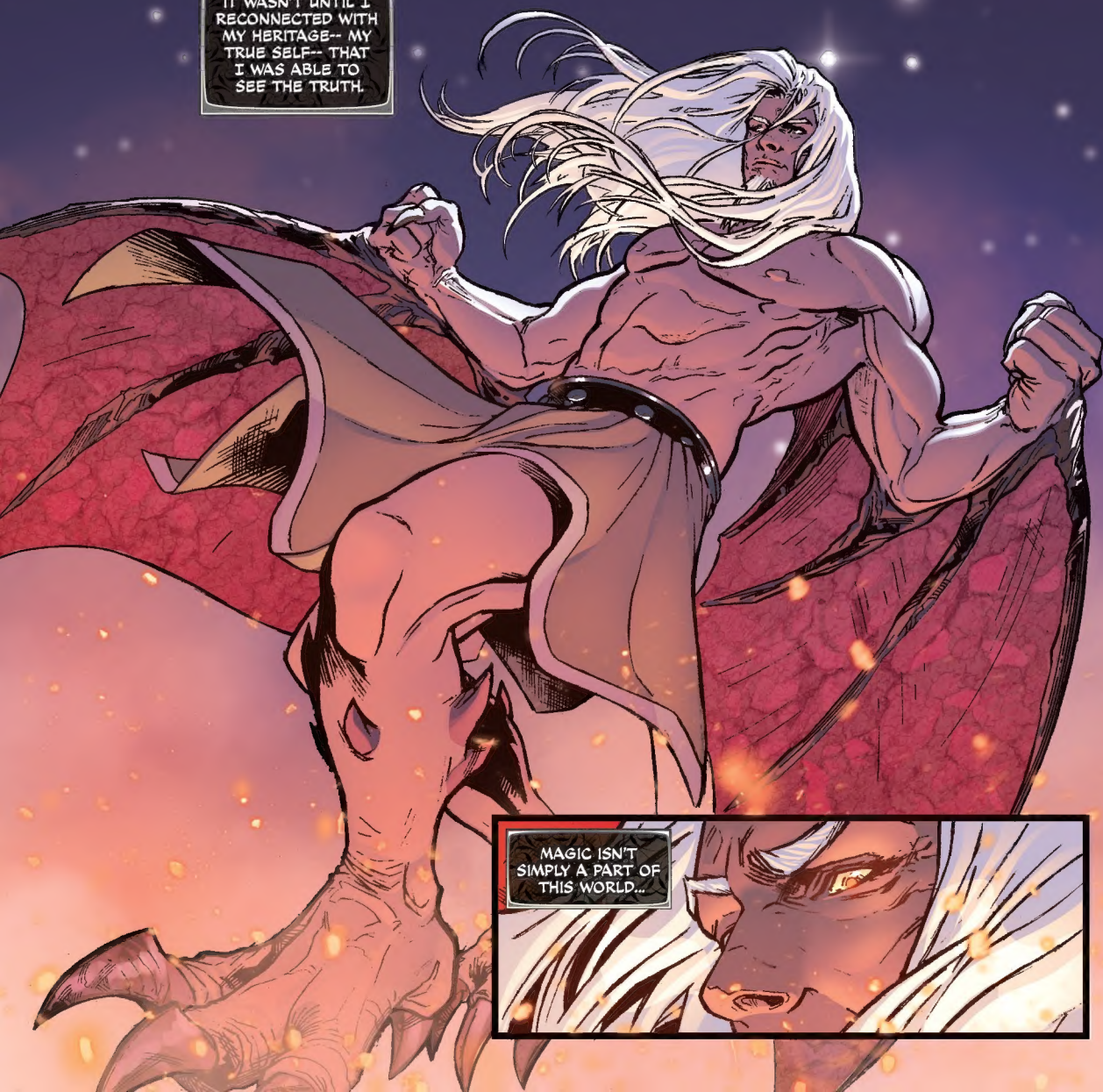
SO
DELUSIONAL.



ONLY THAT
WE'LL KNOW IT
WHEN WE--



IT WASN'T UNTIL I
RECONNECTED WITH
MY HERITAGE-- MY
TRUE SELF-- THAT
I WAS ABLE TO
SEE THE TRUTH.

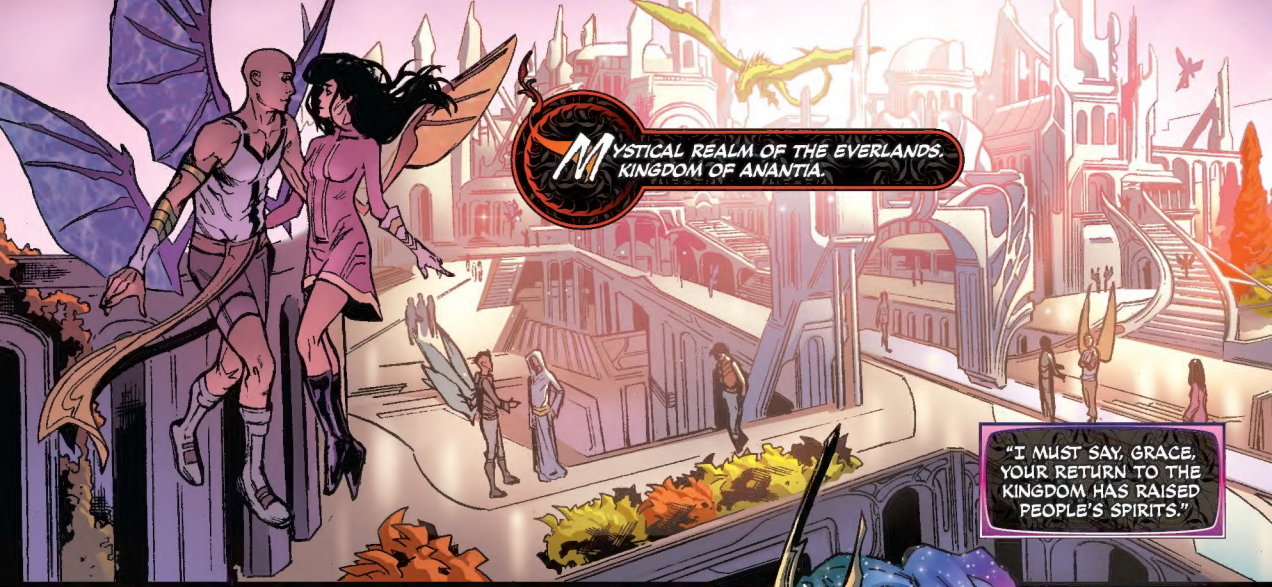


MAGIC ISN'T
SIMPLY A PART OF
THIS WORLD...

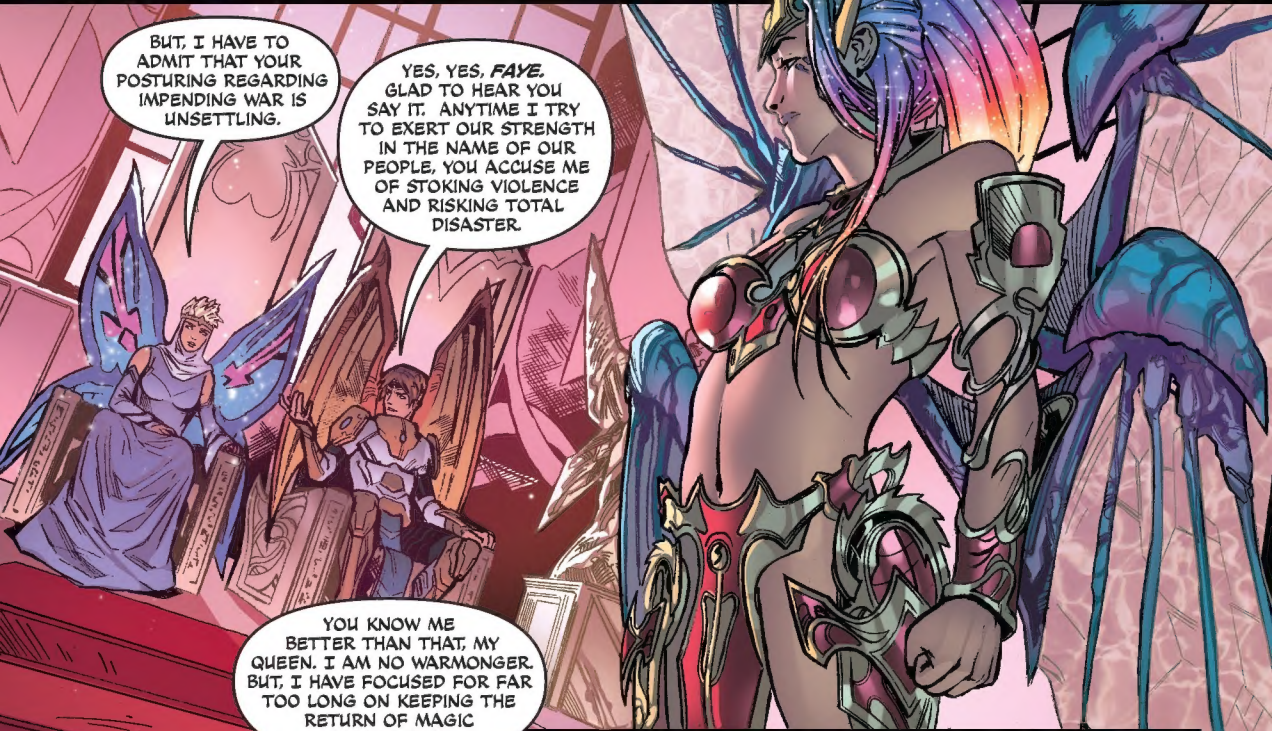


IT IS THE
WORLD.





"I MUST SAY, GRACE, YOUR RETURN TO THE KINGDOM HAS RAISED PEOPLE'S SPIRITS."

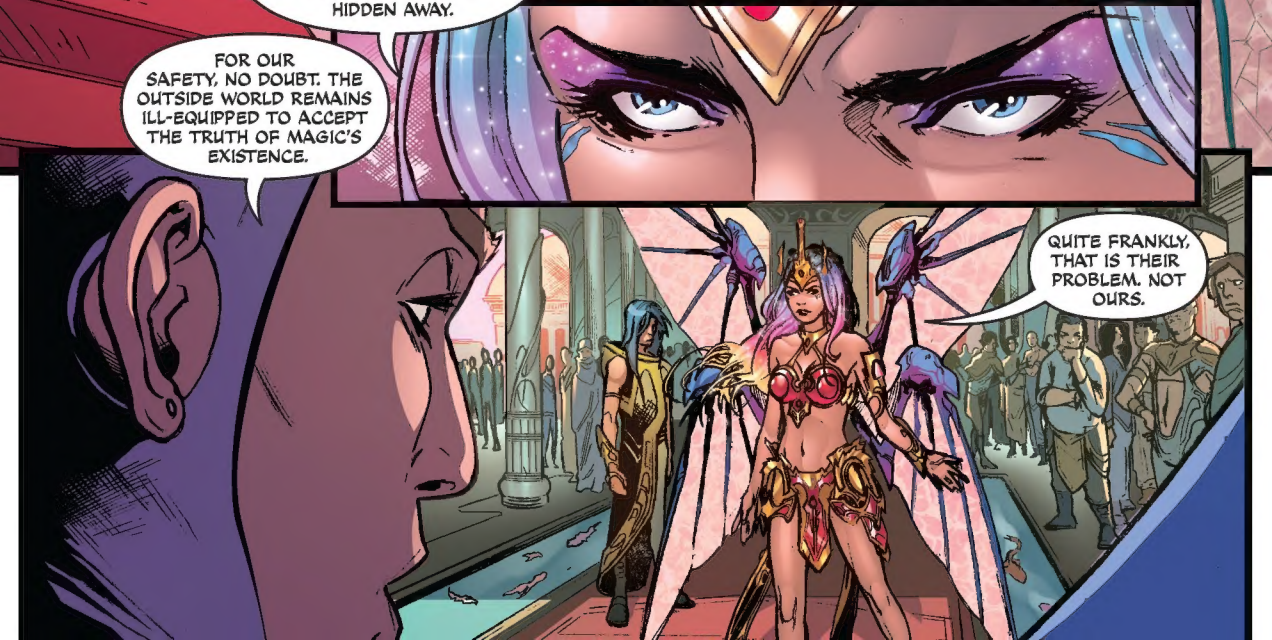


BUT, I HAVE TO ADMIT THAT YOUR POSTURING REGARDING IMPENDING WAR IS UNSETTLING.

YES, YES, *FAYE*. GLAD TO HEAR YOU SAY IT. ANYTIME I TRY TO EXERT OUR STRENGTH IN THE NAME OF OUR PEOPLE, YOU ACCUSE ME OF STOKING VIOLENCE AND RISKING TOTAL DISASTER.

YOU KNOW ME BETTER THAN THAT, MY QUEEN. I AM NO WARMONGER. BUT, I HAVE FOCUSED FOR FAR TOO LONG ON KEEPING THE RETURN OF MAGIC HIDDEN AWAY.

FOR OUR SAFETY, NO DOUBT. THE OUTSIDE WORLD REMAINS ILL-EQUIPPED TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH OF MAGIC'S EXISTENCE.



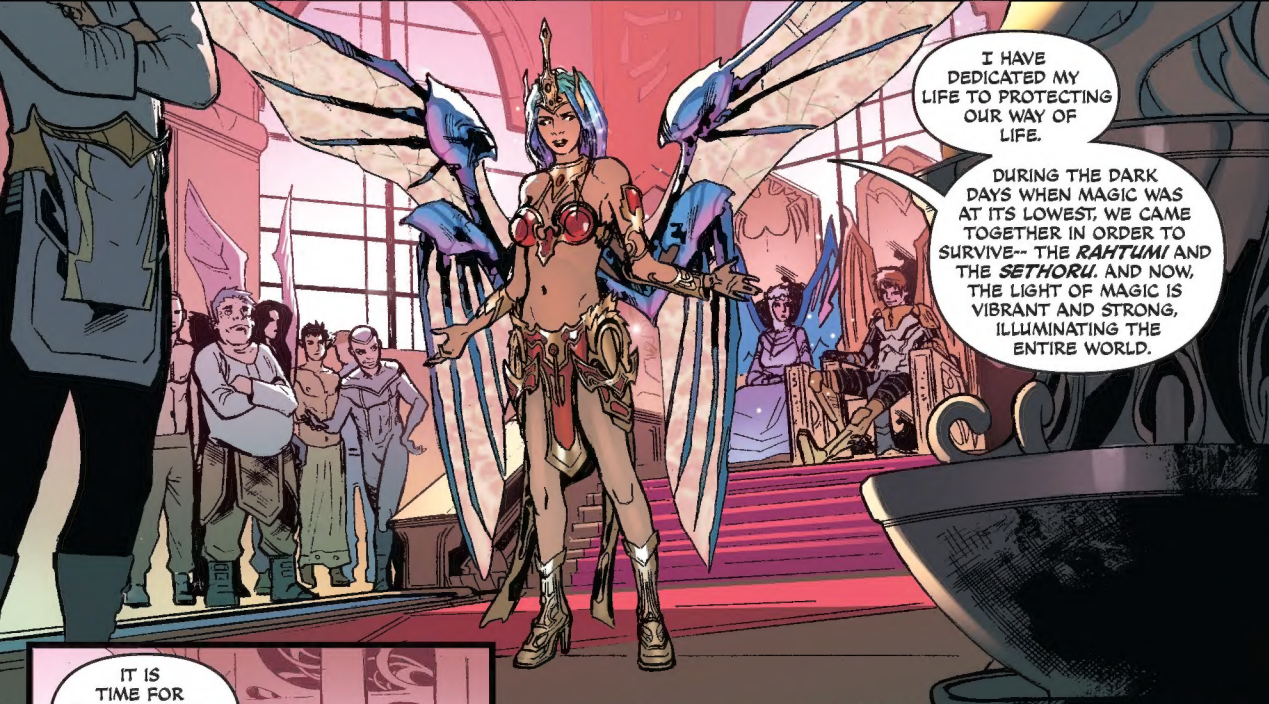
QUITE FRANKLY, THAT IS THEIR PROBLEM. NOT OURS.



OUR WORLD
AND THE REACH
OF MAGIC GOES FAR
BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES
OF THE EVERLANDS. THERE IS
NO REASON WE SHOULD BE
CONFINED IN SUCH A MANNER--
DENYING OURSELVES AND
ALL THE CREATURES OF
MAGIC THE FREEDOM
WE SO RICHLY
DESERVE.

THE
FREEDOM
TO ROAM.

THE
FREEDOM
TO LIVE.



I HAVE
DEDICATED MY
LIFE TO PROTECTING
OUR WAY OF
LIFE.

DURING THE DARK
DAYS WHEN MAGIC WAS
AT ITS LOWEST, WE CAME
TOGETHER IN ORDER TO
SURVIVE-- THE *RAHTUMI* AND
THE *SETHORU*. AND NOW,
THE LIGHT OF MAGIC IS
VIBRANT AND STRONG,
ILLUMINATING THE
ENTIRE WORLD.



IT IS
TIME FOR
US TO DO MORE
THAN THAT. MORE
THAN SIMPLY
SURVIVE.

IT IS OUR
TIME TO
THRIVE.

GRACE KNOWS
HOW TO GET
THEM WORKED UP,
DOESN'T SHE?



YES, *SARIN*.
FOR ONCE THOUGH,
I DO NOT FIND HER
WORDS INSPIRING,
BUT RATHER
TROUBLING.

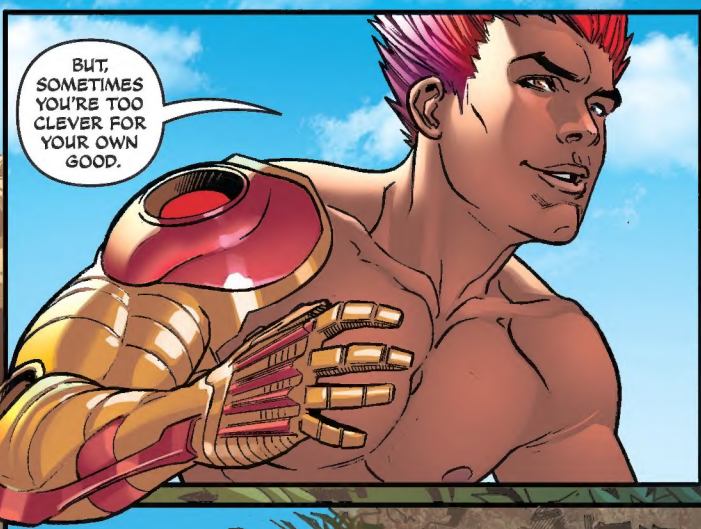
WELL, I AM
INSPIRED.



VERY
INSPIRED.



ALRIGHT,
PAPA BEAR,
BEING PRETTY
SNEAKY.



BUT,
SOMETIMES
YOU'RE TOO
CLEVER FOR
YOUR OWN
GOOD.



EWWOOSHZZZZ!



≡KOFF
KOFF≡

NICE
≡KOFF≡
WORK.
P.J.

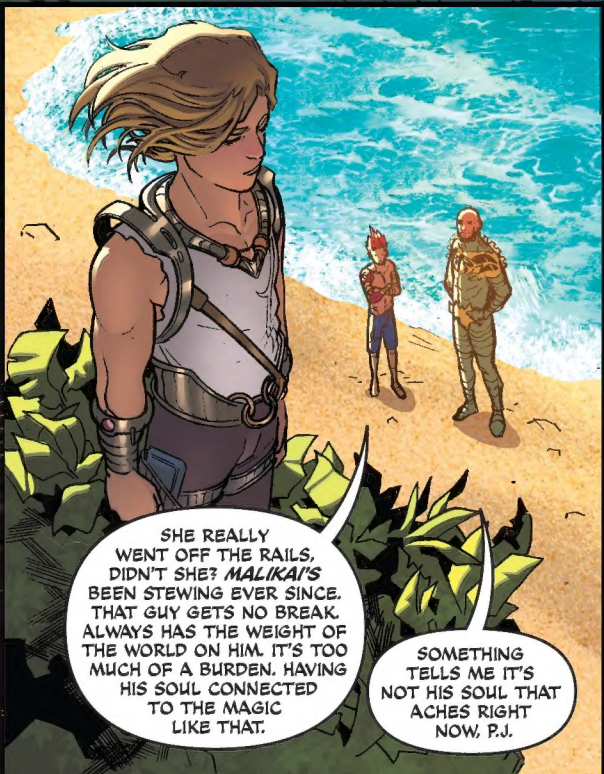
YOU'RE
REALLY GETTING
A HANDLE ON
YOUR UPGRADED
ARM.



GOT YOU
TO THANK FOR
THAT. I'D LIKE TO
SEE GRACE TRY TO
RIP THIS BABY OFF
ME.* SHE'D BE IN
FOR A RUDE
AWAKENING.

KAPOW!

*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE
SOULFIRE VOLUME 7
FOR MORE DETAILS!



SHE REALLY
WENT OFF THE RAILS,
DIDN'T SHE? MALIKAI'S
BEEN STEWING EVER SINCE.
THAT GUY GETS NO BREAK.
ALWAYS HAS THE WEIGHT OF
THE WORLD ON HIM. IT'S TOO
MUCH OF A BURDEN. HAVING
HIS SOUL CONNECTED TO
THE MAGIC
LIKE THAT.

SOMETHING
TELLS ME IT'S
NOT HIS SOUL THAT
ACHES RIGHT
NOW, P.J.

"IT'S HIS
HEART."

THE VIEW CAN
BE A GOOD WAY TO
ESCAPE THE REST OF THE
WORLD. BUT, IT DOESN'T
HELP ONE ESCAPE
THEMSELVES,
MALIKAL.

I KNOW, *PILL*.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
BUT THEN AGAIN,
YOU'RE ALWAYS
RIGHT. AREN'T
YOU?

BENEFIT
OF HAVING
CLAIRVOYANT
VISIONS. AND
HAZARD. BUT
THEN, I DON'T
NEED TO TELL
YOU ABOUT
THE TWO SIDES
OF THE COIN
WE CALL
MAGIC.

NO, YOU
DON'T.

ANY CHANCE
YOU COULD USE YOUR
POWER TO HELP PUT MY
MIND AT EASE? EVER SINCE
SONIA TOOK OFF, I'VE BEEN
A WRECK. SURE, I HATE
THAT SHE'S GONE, BUT
I'M ALSO WORRIED
ABOUT HER.

MALIKAL...

PLEASE? I'M
NOT LOOKING TO
STALK HER. I JUST
WANT TO KNOW
WHERE SONIA IS.
TO KNOW THAT
SHE IS SAFE.

EVEN IF MY
POWER WORKED
THAT WAY-- WHICH
IT DOESN'T-- I
WOULDN'T DO THAT.
IT WOULDN'T BE
FAIR TO SONIA.

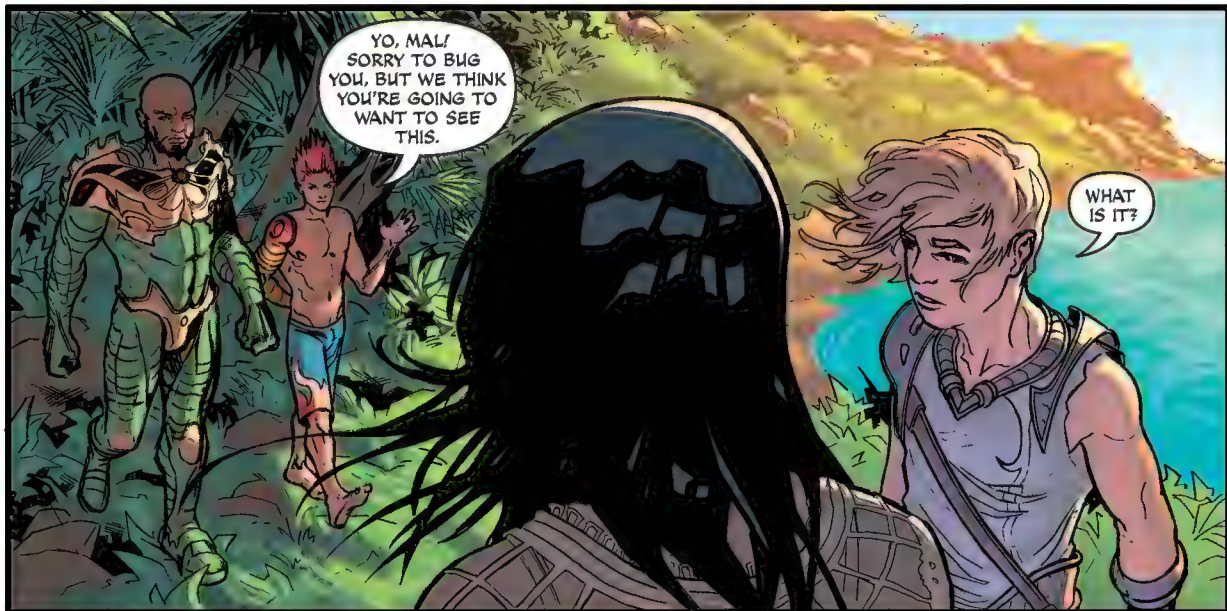
YEAH,
YEAH. I
KNOW.

CAN'T BLAME A
GUY FOR TRYING
THOUGH, RIGHT?

RIGHT.

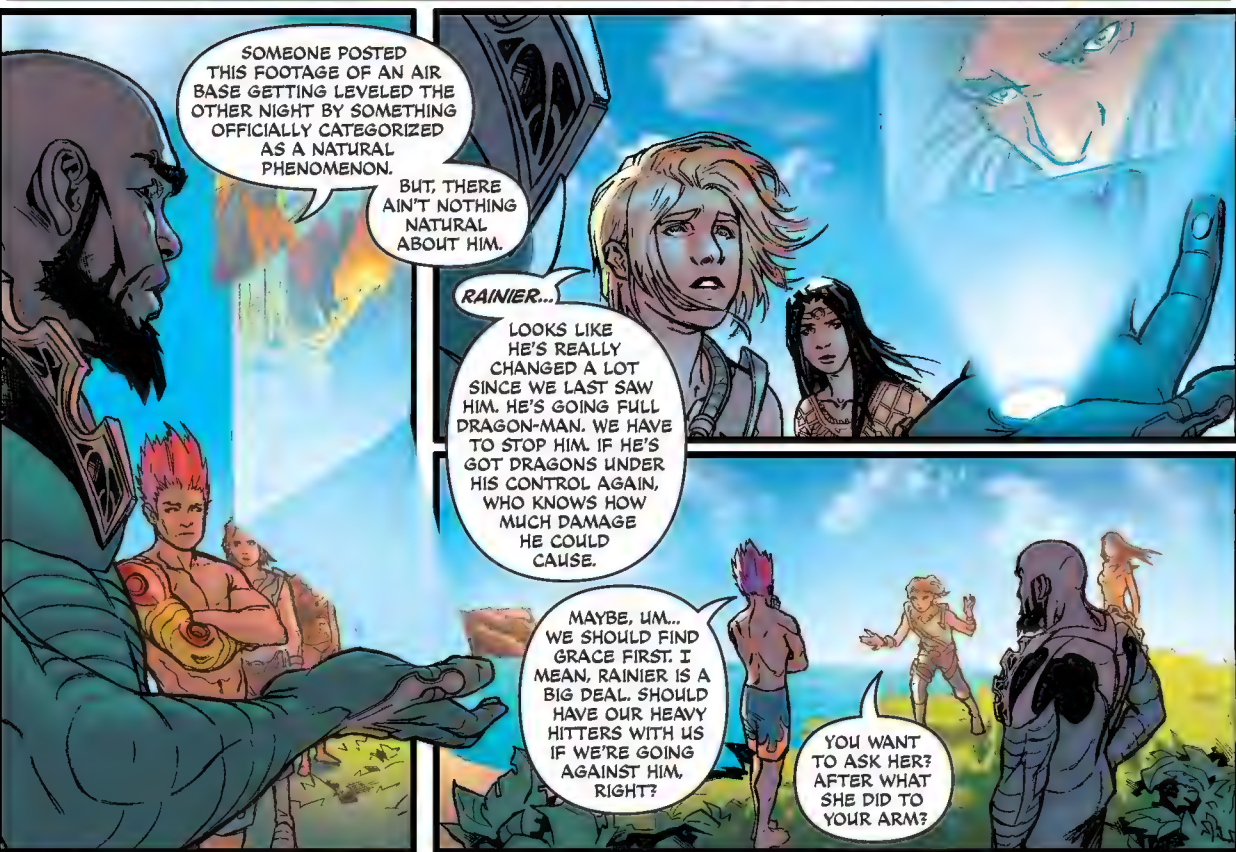
WHATEVER
SHE IS WORKING
THROUGH, SHE WANTS
SOME SPACE. ALL YOU
NEED TO DO IS GIVE
IT TO HER. YOU
CAN DO THAT,
CAN'T YOU?

I
GUESS
SO.



YO, MAL!
SORRY TO BUG
YOU, BUT WE THINK
YOU'RE GOING TO
WANT TO SEE
THIS.

WHAT
IS IT?



SOMEONE POSTED
THIS FOOTAGE OF AN AIR
BASE GETTING LEVELLED
THE OTHER NIGHT BY SOMETHING
OFFICIALLY CATEGORIZED
AS A NATURAL
PHENOMENON.

BUT, THERE
AIN'T NOTHING
NATURAL
ABOUT HIM.

RAINIER...

LOOKS LIKE
HE'S REALLY
CHANGED A LOT
SINCE WE LAST SAW
HIM. HE'S GOING FULL
DRAGON-MAN. WE HAVE
TO STOP HIM IF HE'S
GOT DRAGONS UNDER
HIS CONTROL AGAIN,
WHO KNOWS HOW
MUCH DAMAGE
HE COULD
CAUSE.

MAYBE, UM...
WE SHOULD FIND
GRACE FIRST. I
MEAN, RAINIER IS A
BIG DEAL. SHOULD
HAVE OUR HEAVY
HITTERS WITH US
IF WE'RE GOING
AGAINST HIM,
RIGHT?

YOU WANT
TO ASK HER?
AFTER WHAT
SHE DID TO
YOUR ARM?



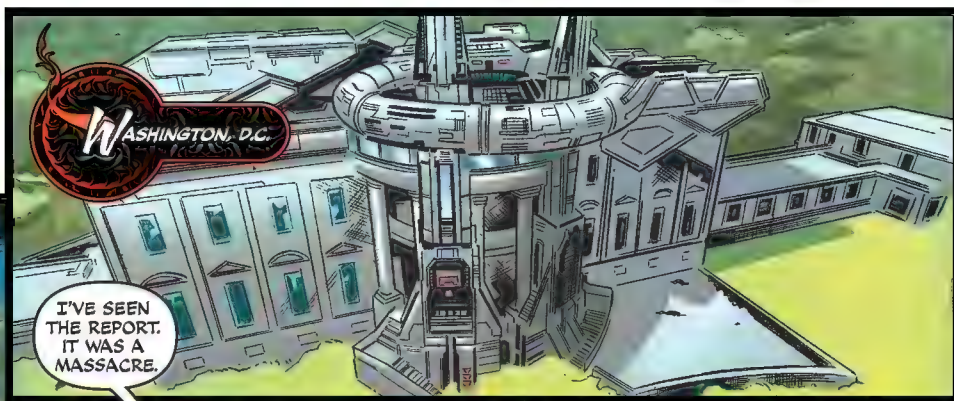
NOT
PARTICULARLY.

SHE'S GOT
HER OWN BATTLES
TO FIGHT. AND, WE CAN'T
STAND BY AND DO NOTHING
WHILE RAINIER WAGES WAR
WITH THE REST OF
THE WORLD.

YEAH,
YEAH. BUT WHY
DOES IT ALWAYS
FALL ON OUR
SHOULDERS?

BECAUSE,
P.J....WHO ELSE
IS GOING TO
RISE TO THE
OCCASION?

LET'S GO.



I'VE SEEN
THE REPORT.
IT WAS A
MASSACRE.

REPORT?
HELL, I'VE
BEEN TO THE
SITE. IT WAS
UNHOLY.

WHATEVER MADIX
WAS TRYING TO STOP AT
DEVIL'S TOWER, HE'S UNLEASHED
SOMETHING MONSTROUS, AND IT
IS GETTING BOLDER. WE HAVE
TO RESPOND WHILE WE
STILL CAN.

WHAT KIND OF
A RESPONSE?

THE
BIGGEST.
NUKE THE
PLACE.



WE NEED
TO KNOW
WHAT WE
ARE DEALING
WITH.

I'LL SETTLE
FOR GETTING MY
ANSWERS LATER BY
SIFTING THROUGH
THE RUBBLE.

GOOD
AFTERNOON,
GENERALS.
IT APPEARS
YOU STARTED
WITHOUT ME.



IF I MIGHT
INTERJECT, SUCH EXTREME
MEASURES SEEM ILL-ADVISED.
PERHAPS IF MADIX HADN'T ASSUMED
HE ALONE COULD HANDLE THE
SITUATION, WE WOULDN'T
BE IN THE DARK.

WITH
ALL DUE RESPECT,
MADAM DEFENSE
MINISTER, I--

PLEASE, JUST
CORDELLA. WE ALL
KNOW MY TITLE. I DON'T
NEED IT RECITED BACK
TO ME AD NAUSEAM. MY
EGO DOESN'T REQUIRE
SUCH STROKING. NOW,
PROCEED... GENERAL.



I WON'T SIT HERE AND LISTEN TO YOU DENIGRATE THE MEMORY OF A FELLOW SOLDIER IN ARMS. *MADIX* WAS A VETERAN LEADER. A DECORATED OFFICER. A HERO.



YES. HE WAS ALL THOSE THINGS. SMART AS WELL. BRAVE. CONFIDENT. AND, BY ALL EVIDENCE-- TOO CONFIDENT. AND BRASH. AND ARROGANT.

HE THOUGHT HE COULD HANDLE IT ALL BY HIMSELF. WITHOUT ANY OTHER HELP OR ADVICE. WORST OF ALL, HE MISTOOK THIS FOR AN ISOLATED INCIDENT. HE FAILED TO GRASP THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION.

THIS RECENT ATTACK REPRESENTS THE LATEST IN A PATTERN OCCURRING ALL AROUND THE GLOBE. STRANGE PHENOMENA. BIZARRE DISASTERS. MASSIVE DEATH TOLLS.

I AGREE THERE IS A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER-- GREATER THAN YOU EVEN REALIZE. ONE THAT THREATENS THE ENTIRE WORLD.



AND WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE AS OUR NEXT MOVE?

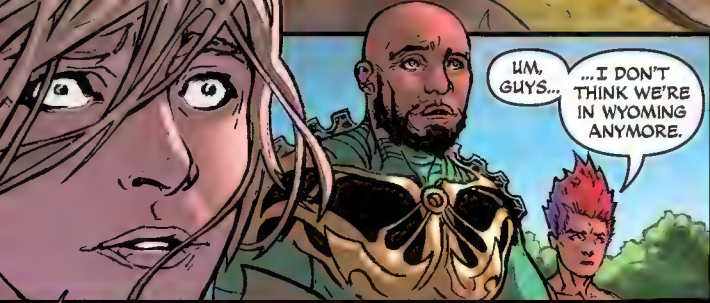
WE FACE IT HEAD ON.

EXCUSE ME, CORDELLA, BUT WASN'T THAT PRECISELY WHAT YOU WERE CRITICAL OF *MADIX* FOR DOING?



YES-- BUT UNLIKE *MADIX*, I'M NOT AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.

AND THE JAPANESE KNOW HOW TO FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE.



UM, GUYS...

...I DON'T THINK WE'RE IN WYOMING ANYMORE.



LOOKS LIKE RAINIER MANAGED TO MAKE HIS NEW LAIR AS DARK AND BLEAK AS HIS HEART. GO FIGURE.

AND I THOUGHT HIS INDUSTRIAL TOWER IN SAN FRANCISCO WAS INTIMIDATING.

THOSE ARE A COUPLE OF MAJOR GUARD DOGS CIRCLING ABOUT. GLAD YOU THOUGHT TO HAVE US APPROACH ON FOOT RATHER THAN FLY IN GUNS BLAZING, B.

WHAT ARE YOU THINKING, MAL? WHAT'S THE PLAN?

NOT SURE. BETWEEN HIS OTHER FOLLOWERS AND THOSE DRAGONS, RAINIER IS PACKING QUITE THE ARMY. AND, HE'S NO LIGHTWEIGHT HIMSELF.



MORE DRAGONS?

NEGATIVE.

WHATEVER YOU GOT, BETTER MOVE FAST. SOMETHING'S COMING UP FROM BEHIND.

IT'S MECHANICAL.





WHOA!
LOOK AT THE
SIZE OF THAT
THING!

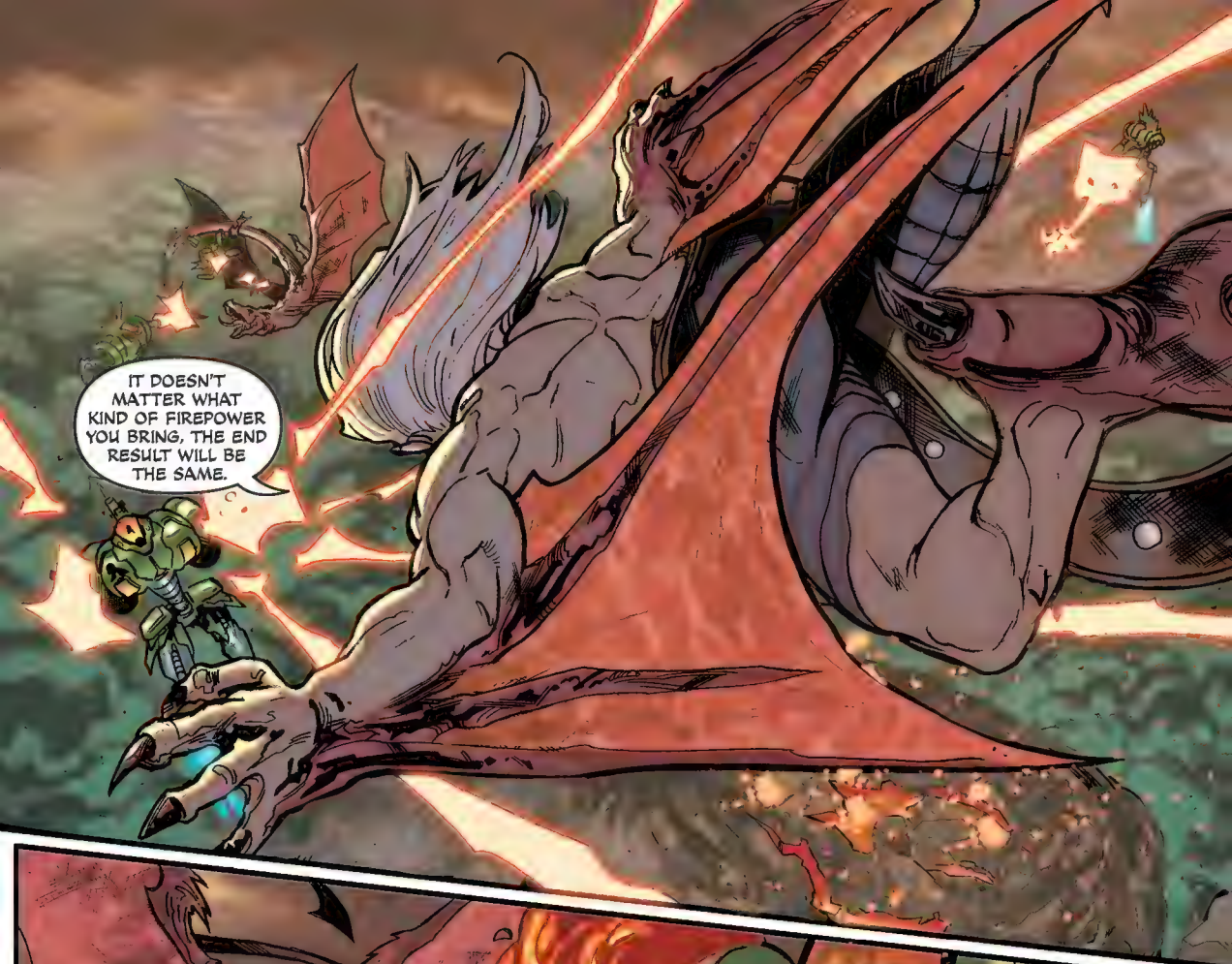


THEY CALLED
IN THE JAPANESE
MILITARY? NOW, THAT'S
WHAT I CALL
BACKUP.

MORE
LIKE THE
FRONT
LINE.

AND
THEY GOT
NO PROBLEM
SHAKING THIS
HORNET'S
NEST.





IT DOESN'T
MATTER WHAT
KIND OF FIREPOWER
YOU BRING, THE END
RESULT WILL BE
THE SAME.



BETTER IF
YOU BOTH STAY
BACK. IT'S TOO
DANGEROUS.

MAL!
WAIT! WHAT
DO WE
DO?



WHATEVER
WE CAN. I'VE
NEVER BEEN ONE
TO LET OTHERS
FIGHT MY
BATTLES.



YEAH,
BUT IS THIS
OUR BATTLE,
BENOIST?

WHAT--
AIN'T
THIS YOUR
WORLD,
TOO?

YOU LOOK
LIKE HELL,
RAINIER. EAT
SOME BAD
SUSHI?

I HAVE
MERELY
RETURNED TO
MY TRUE FORM,
RECLAIMING
MY MAGICAL
CONNECTION
TO MY NAITALI
ANCESTRY.

THAT'S GREAT
AND ALL, BUT YOU
REALLY GOTTA FIND A
NEW HOBBY. ALL THIS
MEGALOMANIACAL
BEHAVIOR IS
GETTING OLD.

I COULD
SAY THE
SAME FOR YOU,
MALIKAI. ALWAYS
OVERPLAYING
YOUR STATION
IN LIFE.

THE MATCH
THAT STARTS
THE FIRE IS NOTHING
COMPARED TO THE
RAGING INFERNO
THAT RESULTS.

BLAH,
BLAH, BLAH.
I'VE HEARD
YOUR MANTRA
BEFORE.

YOU RAMBLE
ON AND ON ABOUT
CONTROL, BUT ALL
YOU EVER BRING
IS CHAOS.

SO MUCH
POWER, YET SO
NA VE. DON'T YOU
REALIZE, CHAOS
IS CONTROL.

STAND
DOWN...



GRACE!



YES!
YOU HEARD
THE LADY,
RAINIER. I'D
DO AS SHE
SAYS IF I
WERE YOU.



GRACE!
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?/?

IT APPEARS
SHE IS JOINING
IN THE CAUSE.

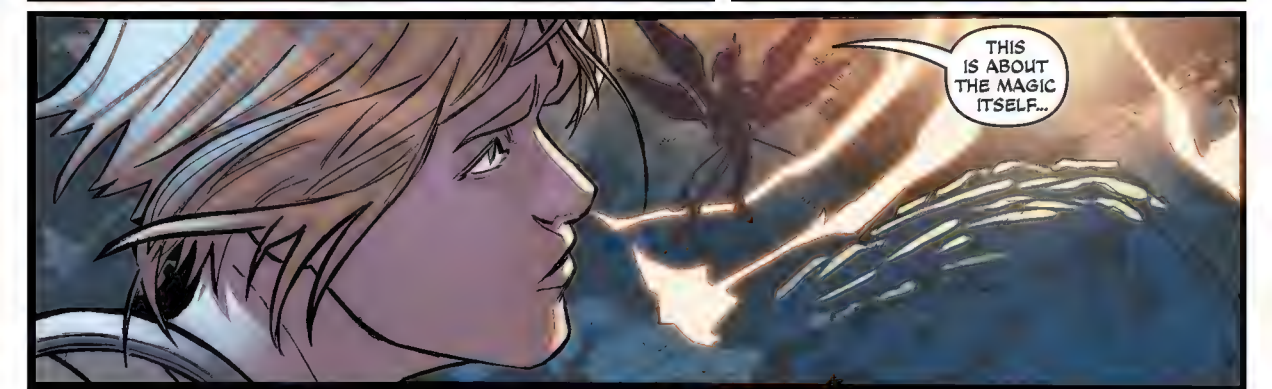


THE
RIGHT
ONE.



GRACE!
STOP!
YOU CAN'T
BE ON HIS SIDE.
NOT AFTER EVERYTHING
YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH.
EVERYTHING WE'VE
BEEN THROUGH.

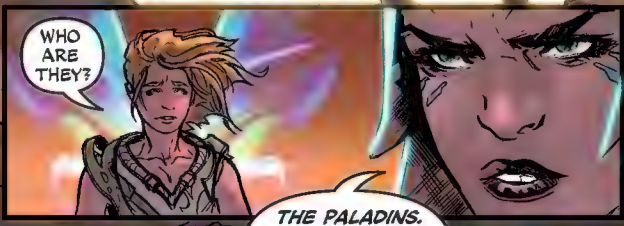
THIS IS
BIGGER THAN
RAINIER AND ME.
OR EVEN YOU,
MALIKAI.



THIS
IS ABOUT
THE MAGIC
ITSELF...

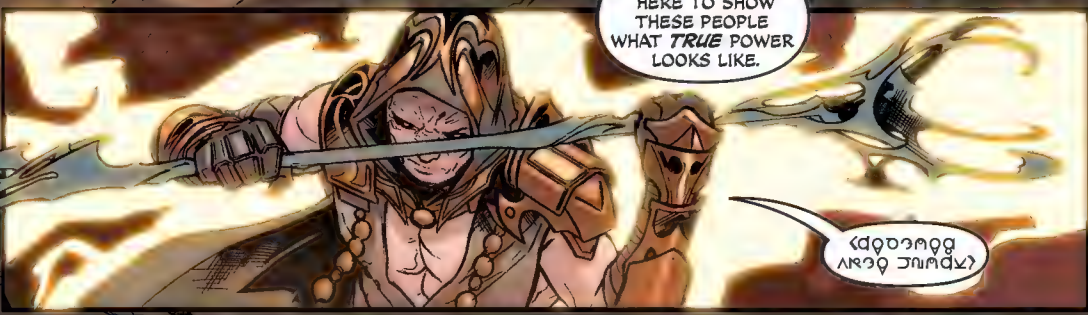


AND, THE
FUTURE OF
THE ENTIRE
UNIVERSE.



WHO
ARE
THEY?

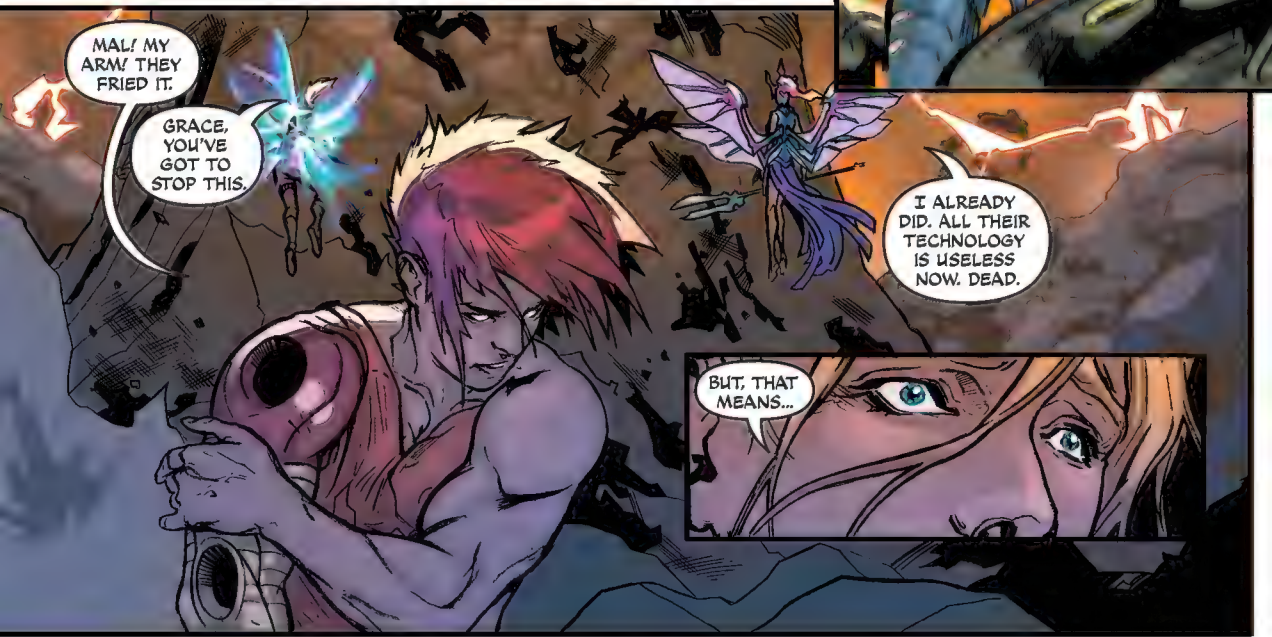
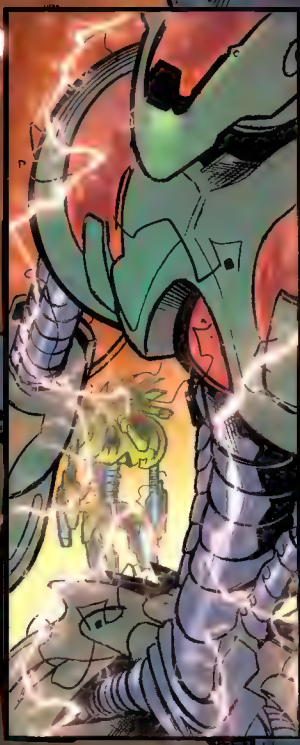
THE PALADINS.
HERE TO SHOW
THESE PEOPLE
WHAT *TRUE* POWER
LOOKS LIKE.



gagagagag
arag arag



«ԺԱՌԱԳ
ՕՈՒԼՅՈՅՆ
ԱՊԵՐԻՆ»

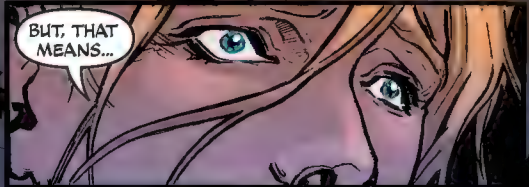


MAL! MY
ARM! THEY
FRIED IT.

GRACE,
YOU'VE
GOT TO
STOP THIS.

I ALREADY
DID. ALL THEIR
TECHNOLOGY
IS USELESS
NOW. DEAD.

BUT, THAT
MEANS...





NO,
NO, NO...
PAPA
BEAR? PLEASE...
YOU GOTTA WAKE
UP... OPEN YOUR
EYES... COME ON...
ANSWER ME.

ANSWER
ME!



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MICHAEL TURNER'S
SOULFIRE

#**2**
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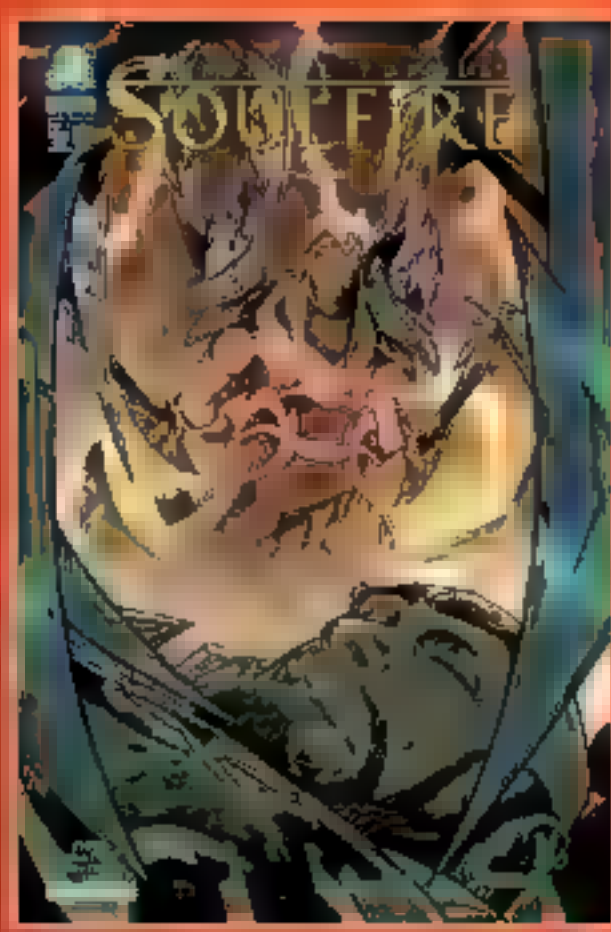
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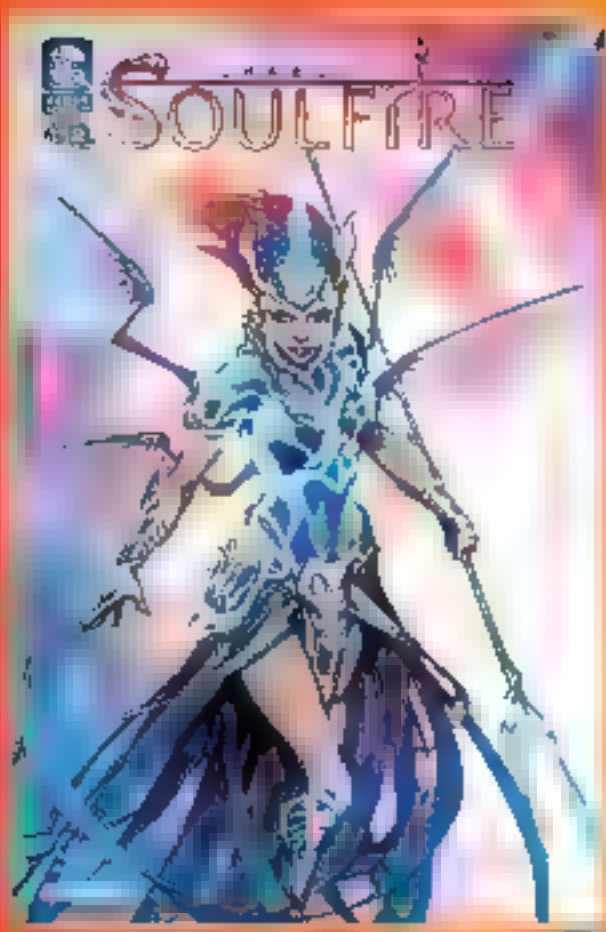
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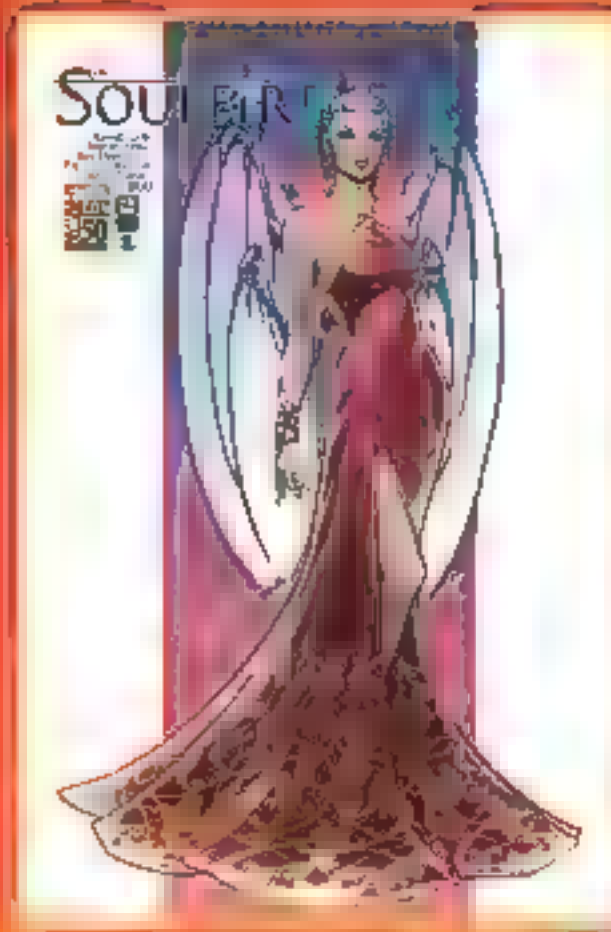
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“BROKERED ALLIANCE”

J.T. KRUL

script

RAFFAELE FORTE

pencils

SARA IANNIELLO

inks

VALENTINA TROOED

(PAGES 2-13)

& JESSE HEAGY

(PAGES 1, 14-20)

colors

ZEN

lettering

Journal of the World Book
ISSUE 2 OF 6

SOULFIRE CREATED BY: MICHAEL TURNER

Editors: Gabe Carrasco, Frank Mastromauro, Design and Production: Mark Roslan, Lettering fonts designed by: Robin Spehar, Comcraft, Blambot

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FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE, MALIKAI THOUGHT VERY LITTLE OF HIMSELF. AN ORPHAN. A DRIFTER. A KID.

BUT THE TRUTH WAS THAT HE WAS PART OF SOMETHING MUCH BIGGER. AN EPIC STRUGGLE TO BRING MAGIC BACK TO THE WORLD.

AND WHILE MANY FOUGHT ON ONE SIDE OR ANOTHER, SEEKING TO PROTECT OR CONTROL THE POWER...

...MALIKAI HAD HIS OWN MISSION. HIS OWN DESTINY. FOR HE IS THE SAMUSARA. A UNIQUE SOUL CONNECTED TO THE MYSTICAL POWER ITSELF. ONE WHO COULD BE THE CATALYST TO RETURN MAGIC TO THE WORLD.

GRACE GUIDED HIM ALONG ON HIS JOURNEY, THEN SEEMED TO BETRAY MALIKAI WHEN HIS SITUATION LOOKED MOST DIRE.

BUT, IT WAS HER ACTIONS THAT UNLEASHED MALIKAI'S TRUE POTENTIAL, FOR HIS SOUL WAS INDEED WORTHY.

AND THUS SPARKED THE NEXT GREAT AGE OF MAGIC.



I DON'T
GET IT.



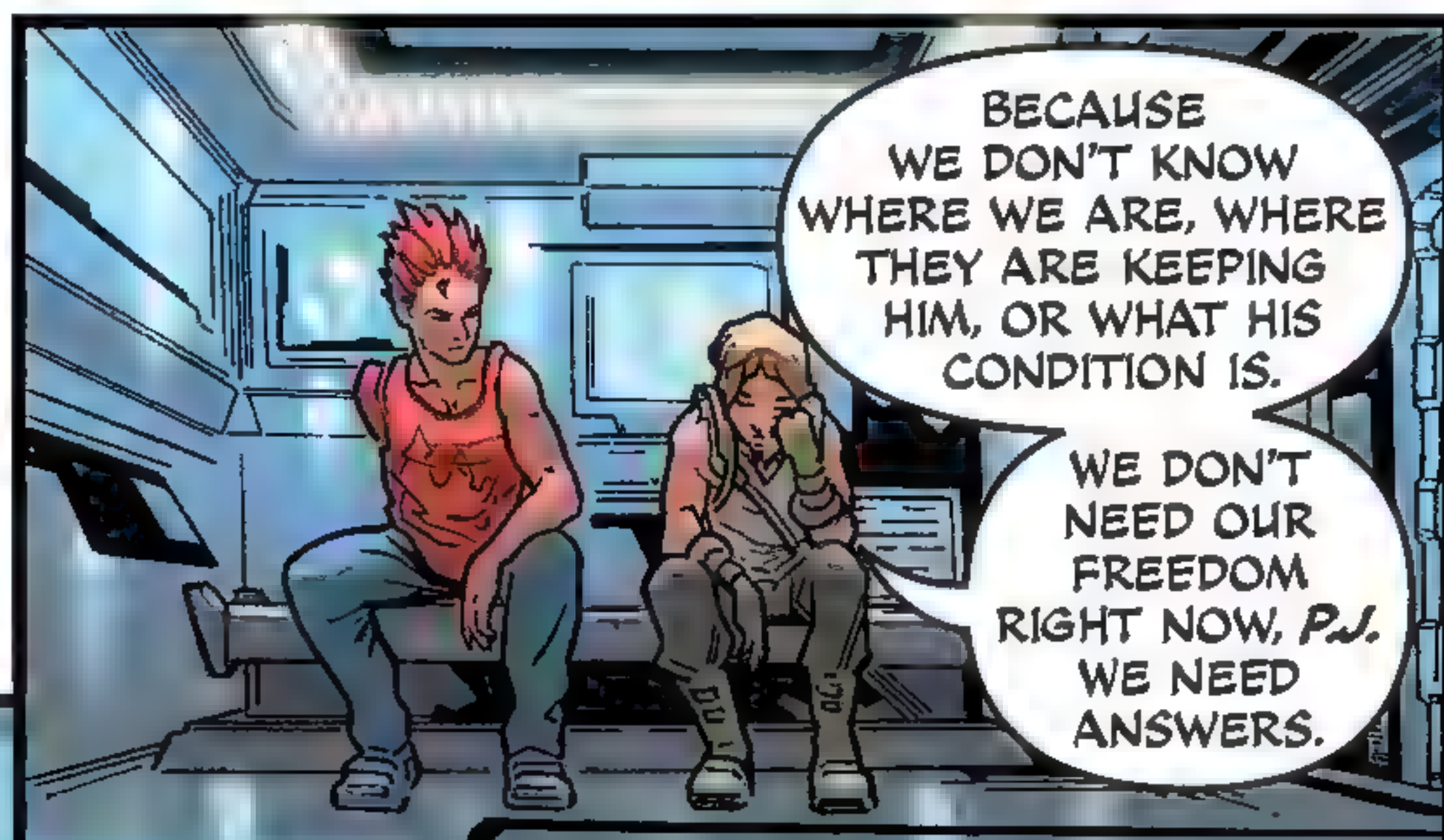
WHAT'S NOT
TO GET? GRACE
AND HER FORCES
USED THE MAGIC TO
KILL ALL TECHNOLOGY
AT THE SCENE OF
THE BATTLE. A
MYSTICAL E.M.P.*

THAT I GET,
MAL. MY ARM WAS
ONE OF THE PIECES
OF TECH FRIED.
REMEMBER?

*ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE.

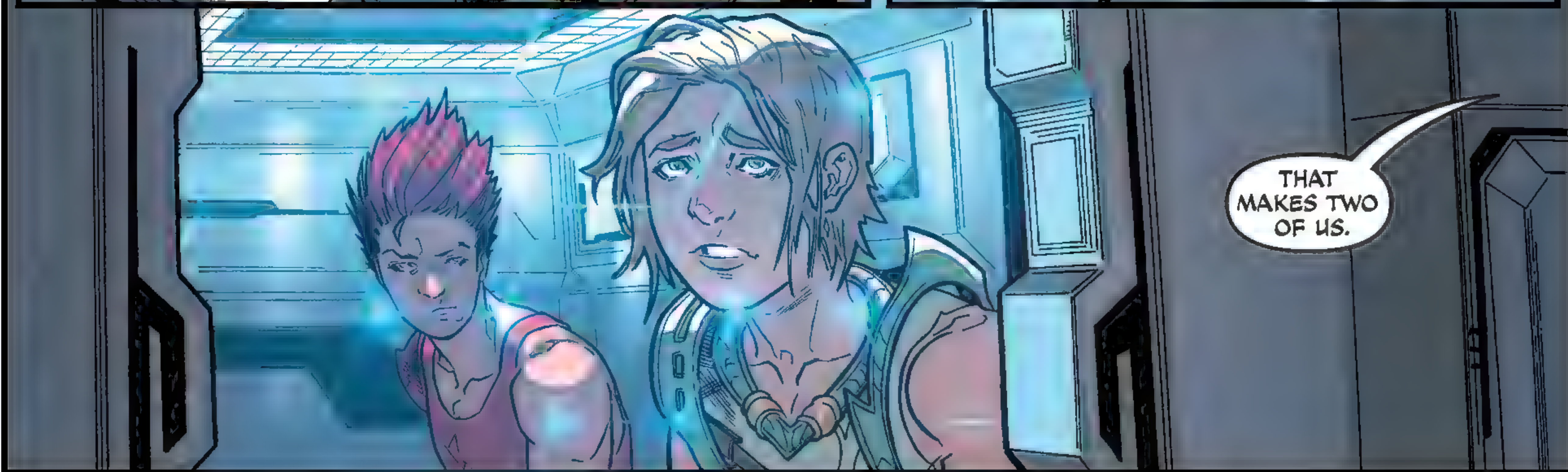


I'M TALKING
ABOUT *BENOIST*. THESE
MILITARY FOOLS DRAGGED
HIM OFF THE FIELD. SO, WHY
ARE WE SITTING IN HERE,
WHEN WE SHOULD BE
OUT THERE LOOKING
FOR HIM?



BECAUSE
WE DON'T KNOW
WHERE WE ARE, WHERE
THEY ARE KEEPING
HIM, OR WHAT HIS
CONDITION IS.

WE DON'T
NEED OUR
FREEDOM
RIGHT NOW, *P.J.*
WE NEED
ANSWERS.



THAT
MAKES TWO
OF US.



WHEN THEY FIRST TOLD ME THEY FOUND A COUPLE OF KIDS IN THE MIDDLE OF EVERYTHING, I FIRST THOUGHT YOU WERE NOTHING BUT A FEW UNLUCKY HIKERS IN THE WRONG PLACE AT THE WRONG TIME.

BUT, THERE'S MORE TO YOU THAN THAT, ISN'T THERE?



WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHERE'S OUR FRIEND?

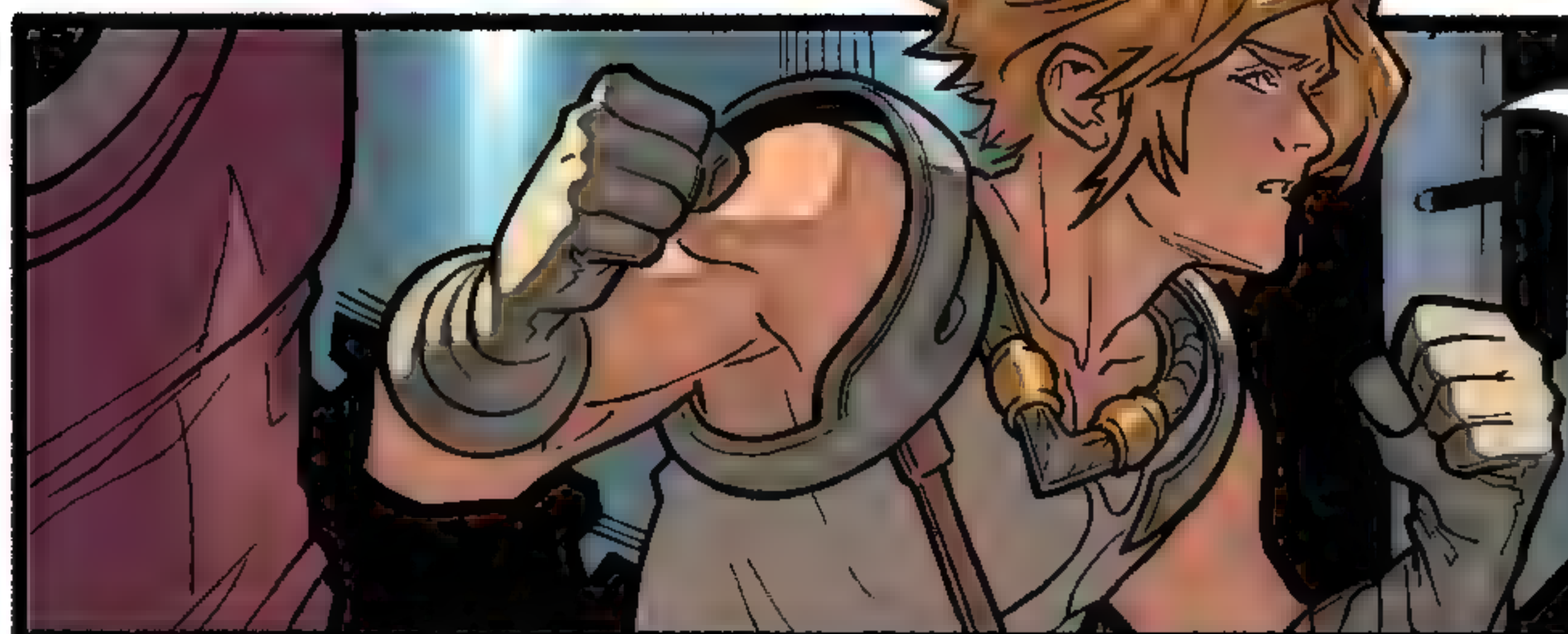
I'M DEFENSE MINISTER CORDELLA.

AS FOR THE REST OF YOUR QUESTIONS, I THINK YOU ARE MISTAKING WHO IS ON WHICH SIDE OF THIS PRISON CELL WALL, KID.

ACTUALLY, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO MADE A MISTAKE IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO BENOIST.



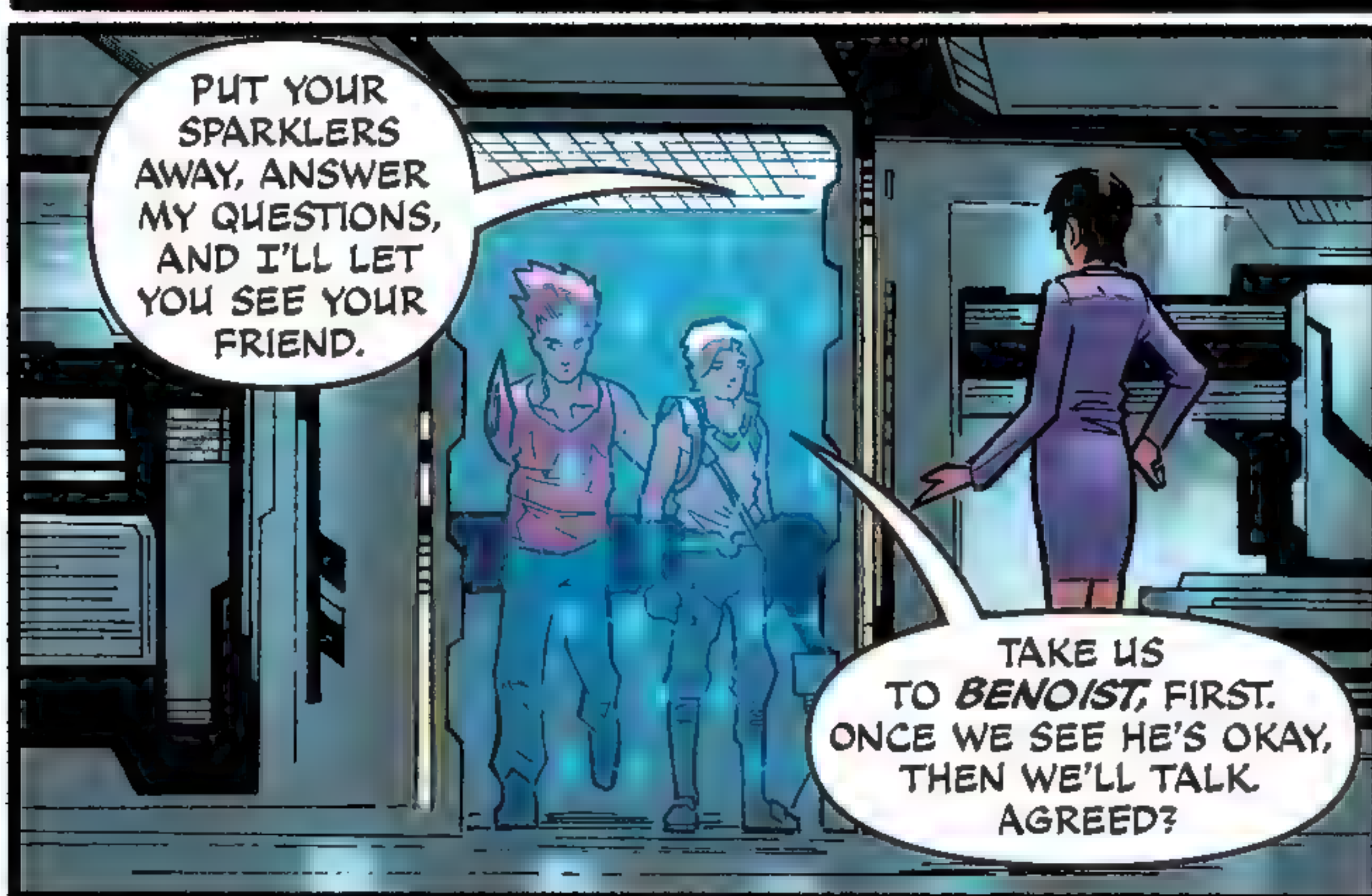
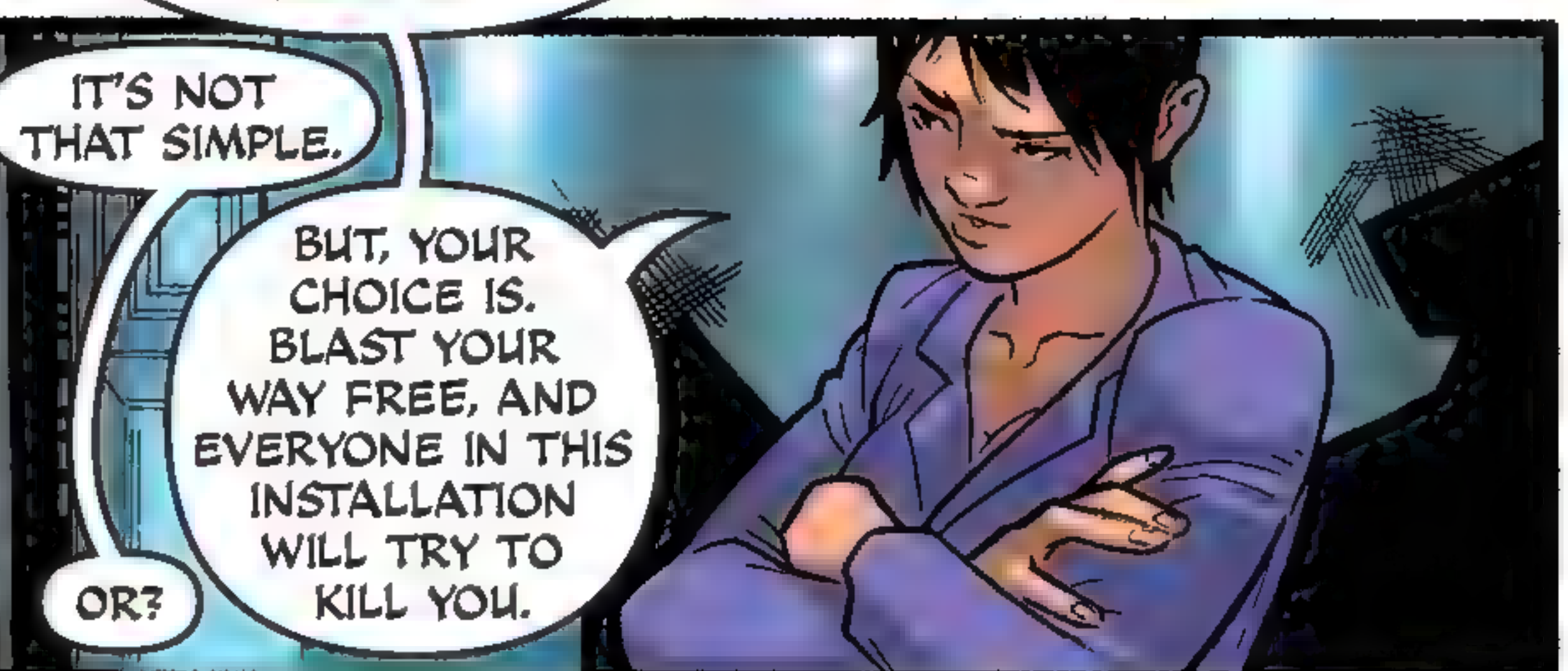
I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THEM. THEN, HOW IS THE BIG GUY YOUR FRIEND? WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?



IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE.

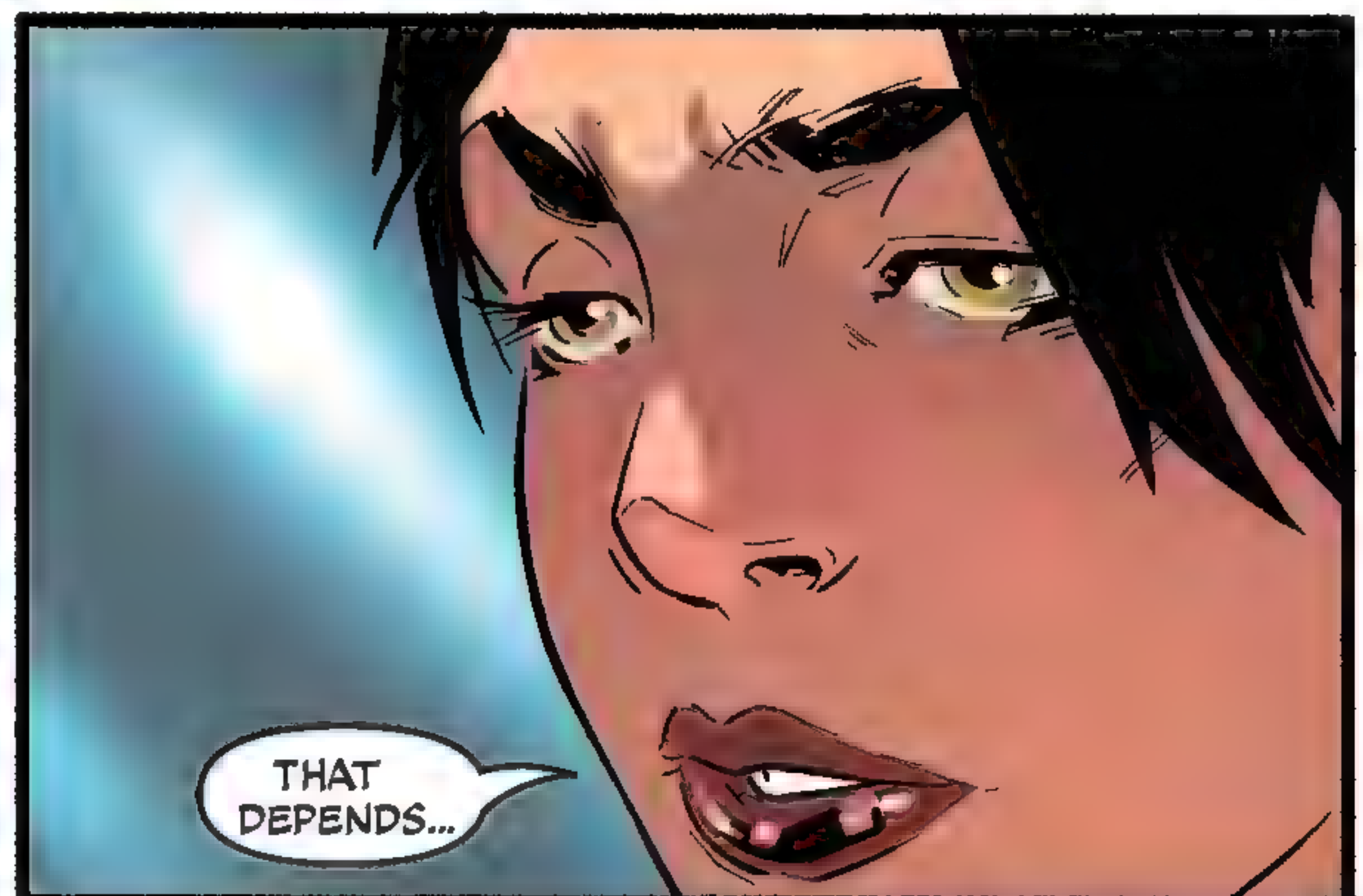
BUT, YOUR CHOICE IS. BLAST YOUR WAY FREE, AND EVERYONE IN THIS INSTALLATION WILL TRY TO KILL YOU.

OR?



PUT YOUR SPARKLERS AWAY, ANSWER MY QUESTIONS, AND I'LL LET YOU SEE YOUR FRIEND.

TAKE US TO BENOIST, FIRST. ONCE WE SEE HE'S OKAY, THEN WE'LL TALK. AGREED?



THAT DEPENDS...

"...ON
WHAT YOUR
DEFINITION
OF *OKAY* IS."

AS YOU ARE AWARE,
BENOIST HAS BEEN
LIVING ON HIS TECHNOLOGY
FOR YEARS. IT IS HIS LIFE
SUPPORT SYSTEM. WHEN THOSE
BEINGS UNLEASHED THEIR
LITTLE TRICK, HE WAS LEFT
VULNERABLE. TOTALLY
POWERLESS.

SURPRISED
HE SURVIVED AT
ALL, GIVEN THE FACT
HE'S MOSTLY MADE
OF METAL.

WE'RE
NOT.

HALF-MAN,
HALF-MACHINE.
ALL HEART.

LUCKY FOR HIM,
WE HAVE PEOPLE
ON OUR TEAM THAT
ARE USED TO WORKING
WITH THIS KIND OF
TECHNOLOGY.

ISN'T
THAT
RIGHT?



INDEED, CORDELLA. FIRSTHAND KNOWLEDGE.

ABEL!



OOOOOMF!

BOOOOMWH!

STICKS AND STONES WILL NEVER HURT ME, P.J.



NOR WILL YOUR INANE PHYSICAL ASSAULTS.



EASY, P.J. NOT THE BEST ROOM TO START A BRAWL. NOT WITH BENOIST IN HIS PRESENT CONDITION.

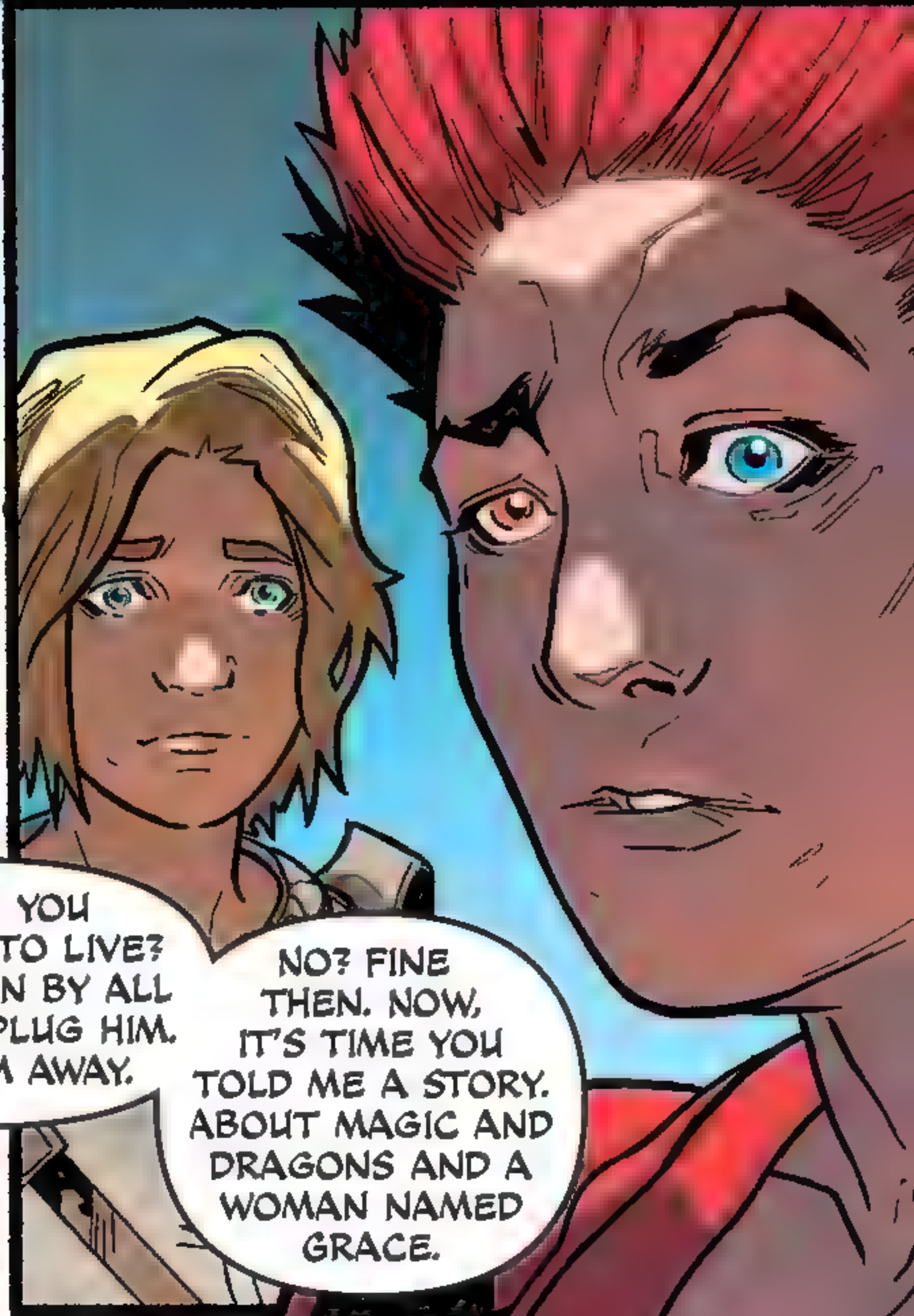
JUST WHAT IS HIS PRESENT CONDITION?

STABLE. WE ARE SCHEDULED TO REPLACE HIS DAMAGED SYSTEMS, BUT HIS INTERNAL POWER CORE NEEDS TO BE REPAIRED AND FULLY CHARGED BEFORE SUCH A PROCEDURE.



YOU THINK WE'RE GOING TO LET YOU ANYWHERE NEAR HIM?

ONLY IF YOU WANT HIM TO LIVE? IF NOT, THEN BY ALL MEANS, UNPLUG HIM. TAKE HIM AWAY.



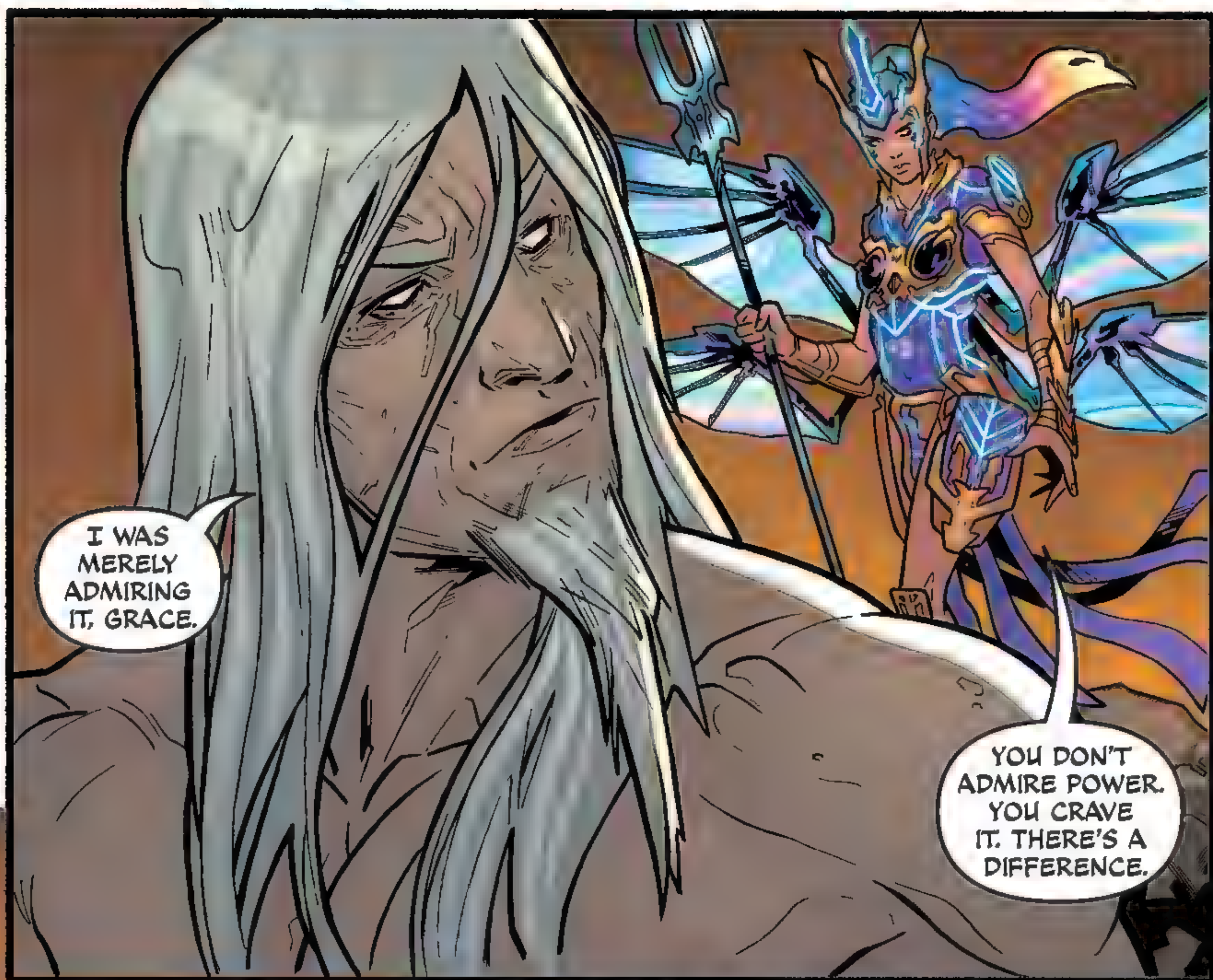
NO? FINE THEN. NOW, IT'S TIME YOU TOLD ME A STORY. ABOUT MAGIC AND DRAGONS AND A WOMAN NAMED GRACE.



WYOMING. DEVIL'S TOWER.



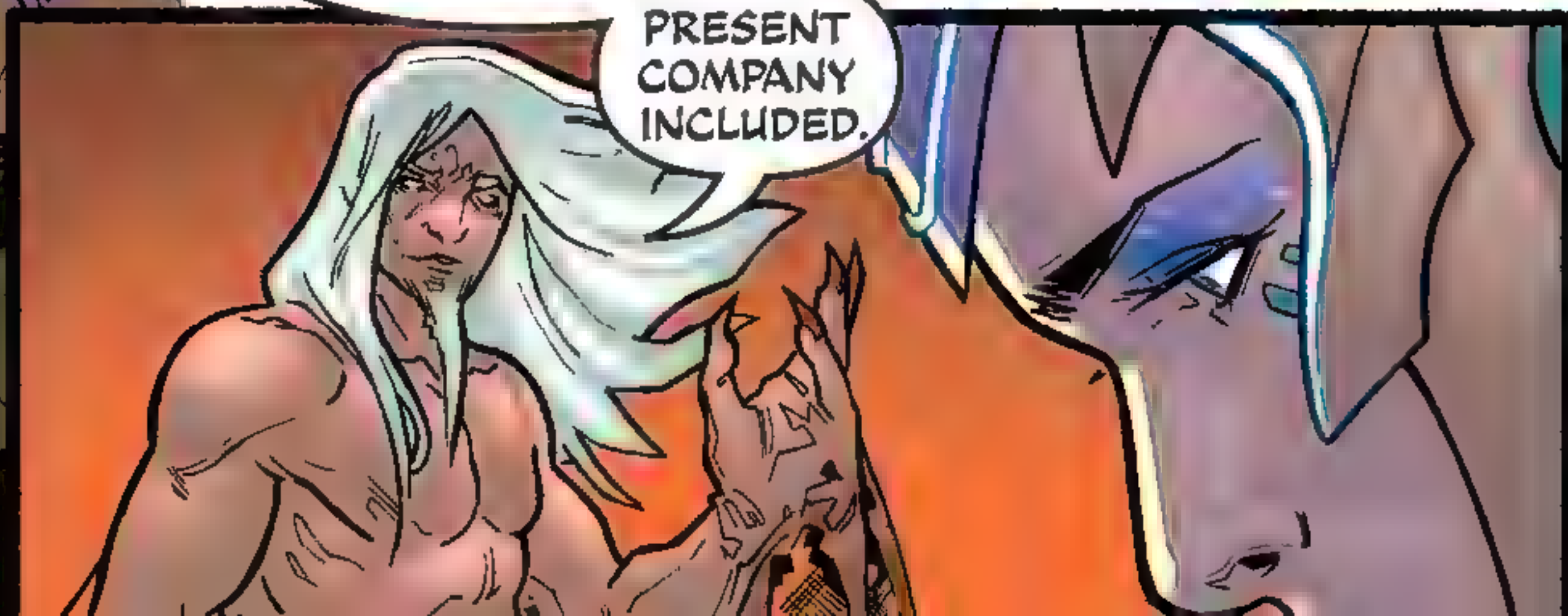
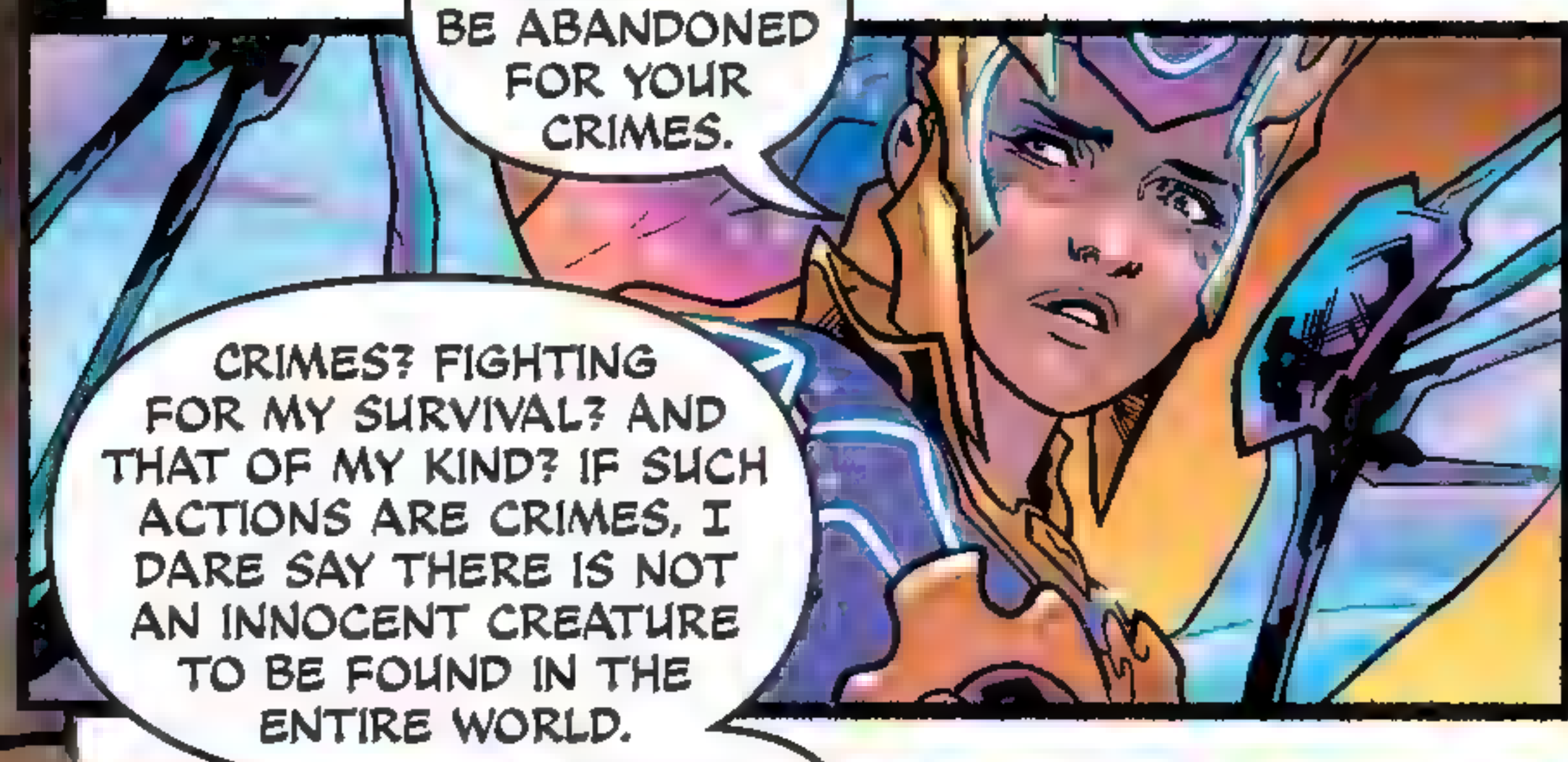
THAT'S CLOSE ENOUGH, RAINIER.



YOU DON'T ADMIRE POWER. YOU CRAVE IT. THERE'S A DIFFERENCE.



THEY DO NOT DESERVE TO BE ABANDONED FOR YOUR CRIMES.





LOOK AT THEM, GRACE. THEY DO NOT OBEY ME BECAUSE THEY ARE MY SLAVES. THEY FIGHT WITH US BECAUSE WE ARE ON THE SAME SIDE. THE SIDE OF MAGIC.

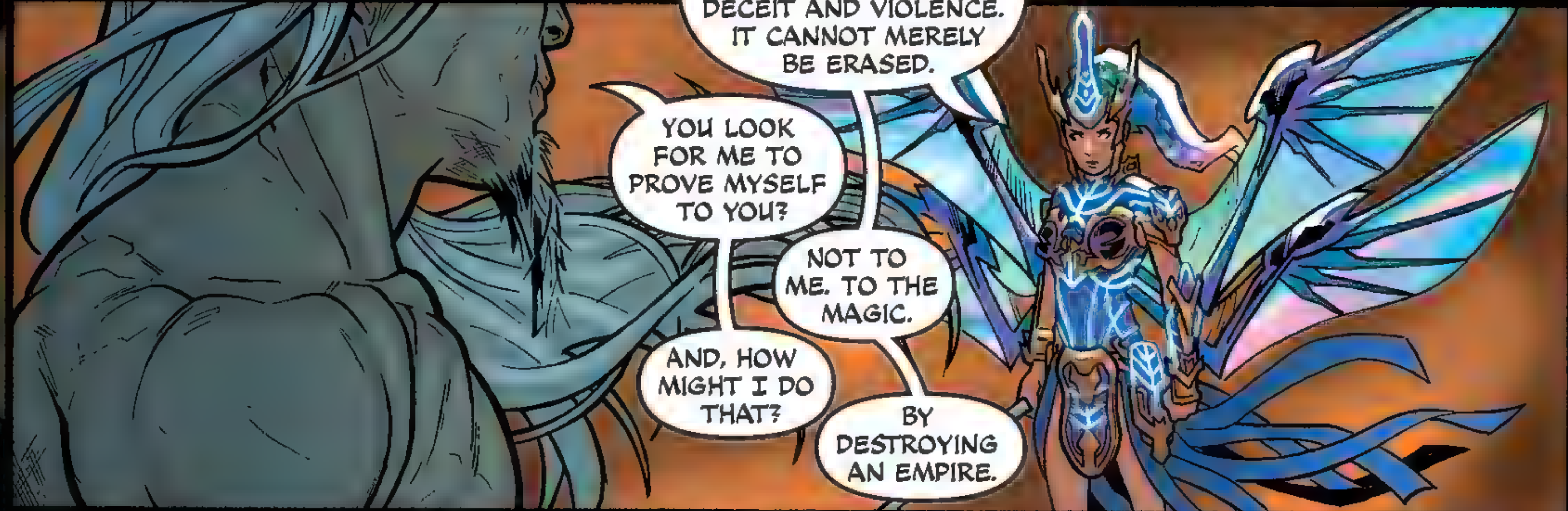


I CAN ADMIT THAT I LOST MY WAY. FOUGHT THE WRONG PEOPLE. FOR THE WRONG REASONS.

BUT, LOOK AT ME NOW. I AM A CHANGED MAN. IN FACT, NO LONGER A MAN. SOMETHING MORE. A NAITALI ONCE AGAIN.

I HAVE FOUND MYSELF.

I CAN SEE THAT, BUT OUR CONFLICT SPANS AGES. CENTURIES OF LIES AND DECEIT AND VIOLENCE. IT CANNOT MERELY BE ERASED.



YOU LOOK FOR ME TO PROVE MYSELF TO YOU?

NOT TO ME. TO THE MAGIC.

AND, HOW MIGHT I DO THAT?

BY DESTROYING AN EMPIRE.



YOUR EMPIRE.



THIS CORDELLA SEEMS TO MEAN BUSINESS BY THE LOOK OF THINGS. THINK SHE STANDS A CHANCE?

AGAINST GRACE AND RAINIER? WHO COULD?

FOR A SO-CALLED ENLIGHTENED ONE, YOU SURE HAVE A DARK OUTLOOK.

HEY, BOYS. WELCOME ABOARD.

BLACKJACK!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

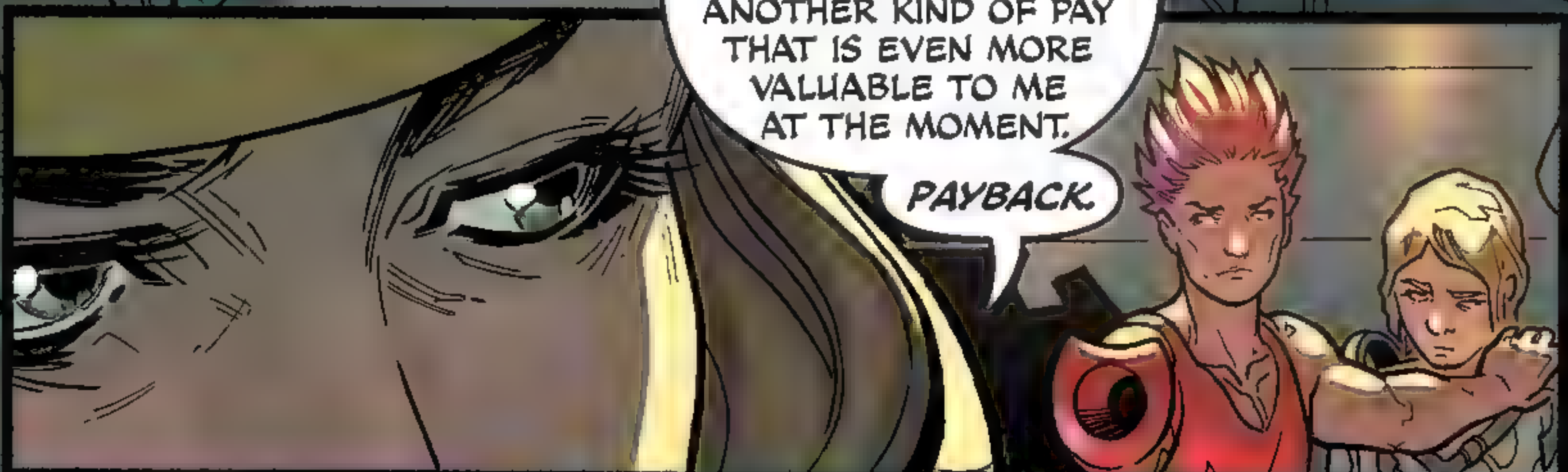
EASY, MAL. YOU SAID IT YOURSELF. THIS AIN'T THE TIME OR PLACE TO GO NUCLEAR.

WAIT, SO P.J. IS THE SENSIBLE ONE NOW? WOW, TIMES REALLY HAVE CHANGED. ALLIES ARE ENEMIES. ENEMIES ARE ALLIES.

THOUGHT FOR YOU IT WAS ONLY THOSE WHO PAY AND THOSE WHO DON'T?

UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, YEAH, BUT THESE AREN'T NORMAL TIMES ARE THEY? AND, THERE'S ANOTHER KIND OF PAY THAT IS EVEN MORE VALUABLE TO ME AT THE MOMENT.

PAYBACK.





BESIDES, I SAW THE WRITING ON THE WALL SOON AFTER RAINIER HIRED ME. HE WENT OFF THE DEEP-END. TURNED INTO A MONSTER BEFORE MY VERY EYES.

HE WAS ALWAYS A MONSTER.

YEAH, WELL, I SAW THAT I COULD NEVER BE PART OF HIS CLUB. NOT FOR THE LONG HAUL. SOONER OR LATER, HE WOULDN'T NEED ME ANYMORE. SOONER OR LATER, I'D GO FROM BEING AN ASSET TO A LIABILITY.



SPEAKING OF LIABILITIES, YOU'RE LOOKING RATHER SHORT-HANDED AT THE MOMENT, EH?

SCREW YOU.

YOU NEVER WERE ONE FOR THE WITTY COMEBACK.



MAYBE, YOU WANT TO TAKE SOME MORE TIME. THINK OF SOMETHING BETTER?

OR YOU COULD FOCUS YOUR ENERGY ELSEWHERE, SO YOU WON'T BE STUCK ON THE SIDELINES. FOLLOW ME.



WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO START TAKING ORDERS FROM CORDELLA, BLACKJACK. WHAT MAKES YOU THINK WE'LL BE FIGHTING ON YOUR SIDE?

JUST BECAUSE I FIGHT FOR THE HIGHEST BIDDER MOST TIMES, THAT DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T KNOW WHO THE GOOD GUYS ARE. I KNOW THE KIND OF FIREPOWER YOU CARRY, MALIKAL. YOU COULD PROBABLY INCINERATE THIS WHOLE PLACE IF YOU WANTED TO.

BUT, YOU DON'T.

HERE. I THINK P.J. WILL FIND SOMETHING HE LIKES.

OH, NO...

WHAT IS IT, MAL? NOTHING GOOD?





NOT GOOD.
ALL BAD IN
FACT. A WHOLE
LOT OF BAD.

ALORI?



YES?

YES?

YES?

YES?



ALORI, YOU
REMEMBER
ME?

HE KNOWS
ABEL'S
ANDROIDS?

HE KNEW
ONE OF THEM.
FOUND OUT SHE
WAS ARTIFICIAL
THE HARD WAY.*

YOU DON'T
MEAN...THEY HAD
A RELATIONSHIP?

THEY DID.

*SEE SOULFIRE VOL. 5
FOR MORE DETAILS!



RIGHT
UP UNTIL THE
POINT WHEN SHE
TRIED TO KILL
HIM.



"IS RAINIER
TREATING
YOU WELL?"

VERY. BUT, IT
WASN'T LIKE THAT,
GRACE. I DIDN'T LEAVE
YOU FOR RAINIER. YOU
KNOW THAT, RIGHT?
I WAS JUST TRYING
TO FIND WHERE
I BELONG.

I KNOW,
VANYSS.

IT'S GOOD
TO SEE YOU
AGAIN.

YOU TOO, GRACE.
I ONLY WISH IT WAS
UNDER DIFFERENT
CIRCUMSTANCES.

YOU WERE
SMART TO GO YOUR
OWN WAY BACK IN PARIS.
THIS IS THE TYPE OF CHAOS
THAT SURROUNDS ME AT ALL
TIMES. STUCK SOMEHOW IN A
NEVER-ENDING STRUGGLE
FILLED WITH VIOLENCE
AND BLOODSHED.

YOU ALWAYS
WERE A DEDICATED
SOUL, GRACE. THAT'S
ONE OF THE THINGS
I LOVED ABOUT
YOU.

AND, I
LOVED
YOU.

YOU AND
THE LIGHT YOU
BROUGHT INTO
MY LIFE.

EVEN IF IT
COULDN'T
LAST.

"DESTINY IS A FUNNY
THING, POWERFUL
AND MYSTERIOUS."



I NEVER EXPECTED TO BE HERE AGAIN.

STANDING ATOP OF THIS MOUNTAIN OF INDUSTRY I BUILT FROM NOTHING. FOR LONGER THAN I CAN REMEMBER, IT WAS THE DRIVING FORCE IN MY LIFE.

WHEN I LEFT THE LAST TIME, IT WAS THE START OF A NEW ERA. I HAD PLANNED ON LEAVING THIS EMPIRE TO YOU. TO DO WITH WHAT YOU WOULD.

BUT, SOMEONE REMINDED ME THAT I CANNOT SIMPLY TURN THE PAGE. CANNOT START ON A NEW PATH. NOT WITHOUT UNDOING WHAT I HAVE DONE. BURNING THAT BRIDGE BEHIND ME.



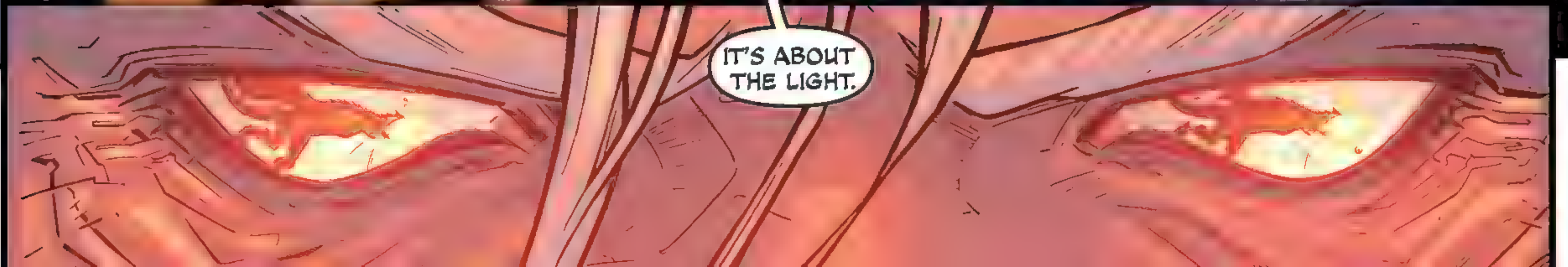
OR RATHER BURNING MY FORMER SELF.



DESTROYING IT IN ORDER TO BE REBORN.



LIKE A PHOENIX.



LET ME
OUTTA
HERE!

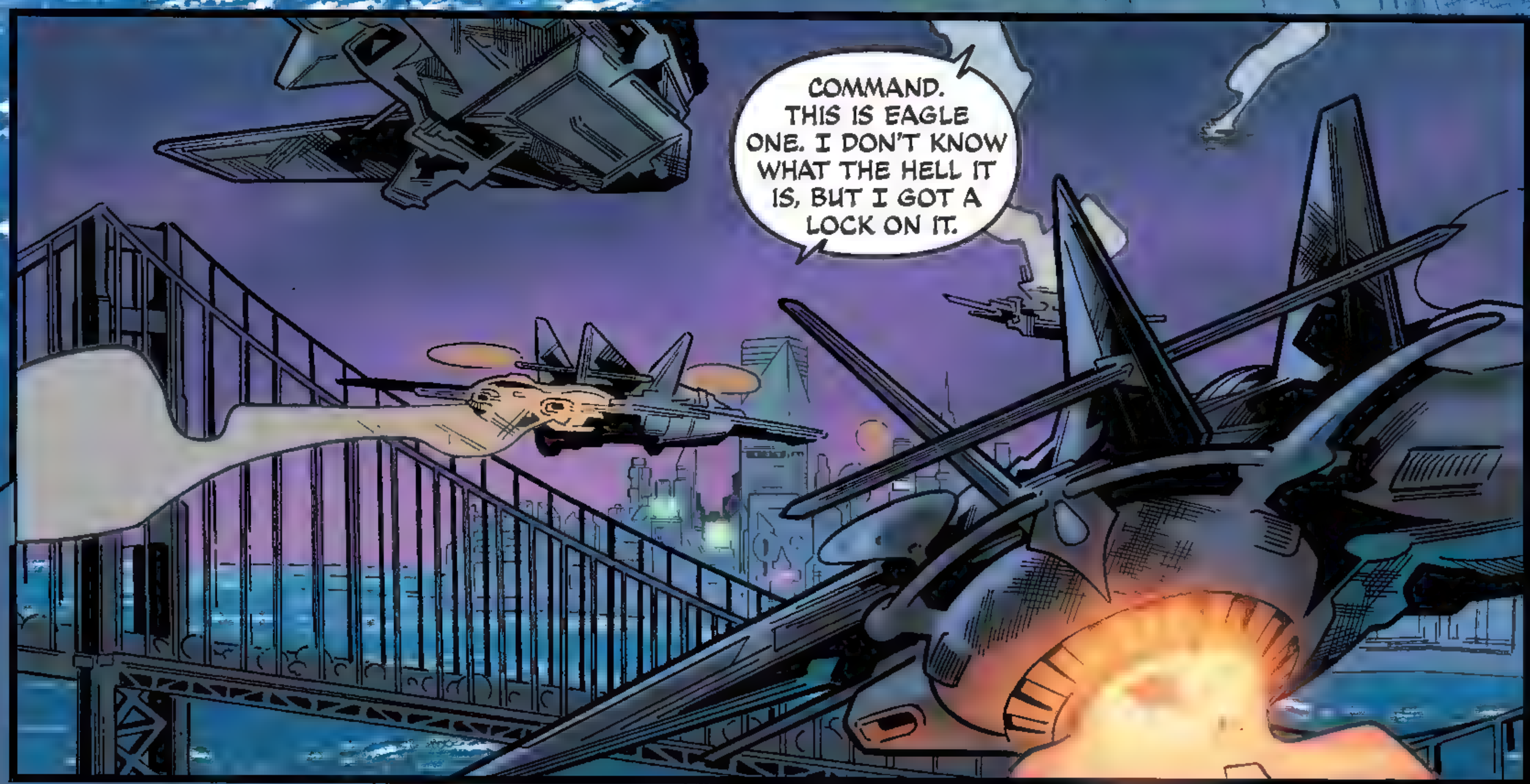
WHAT'S
HAPPENING?!

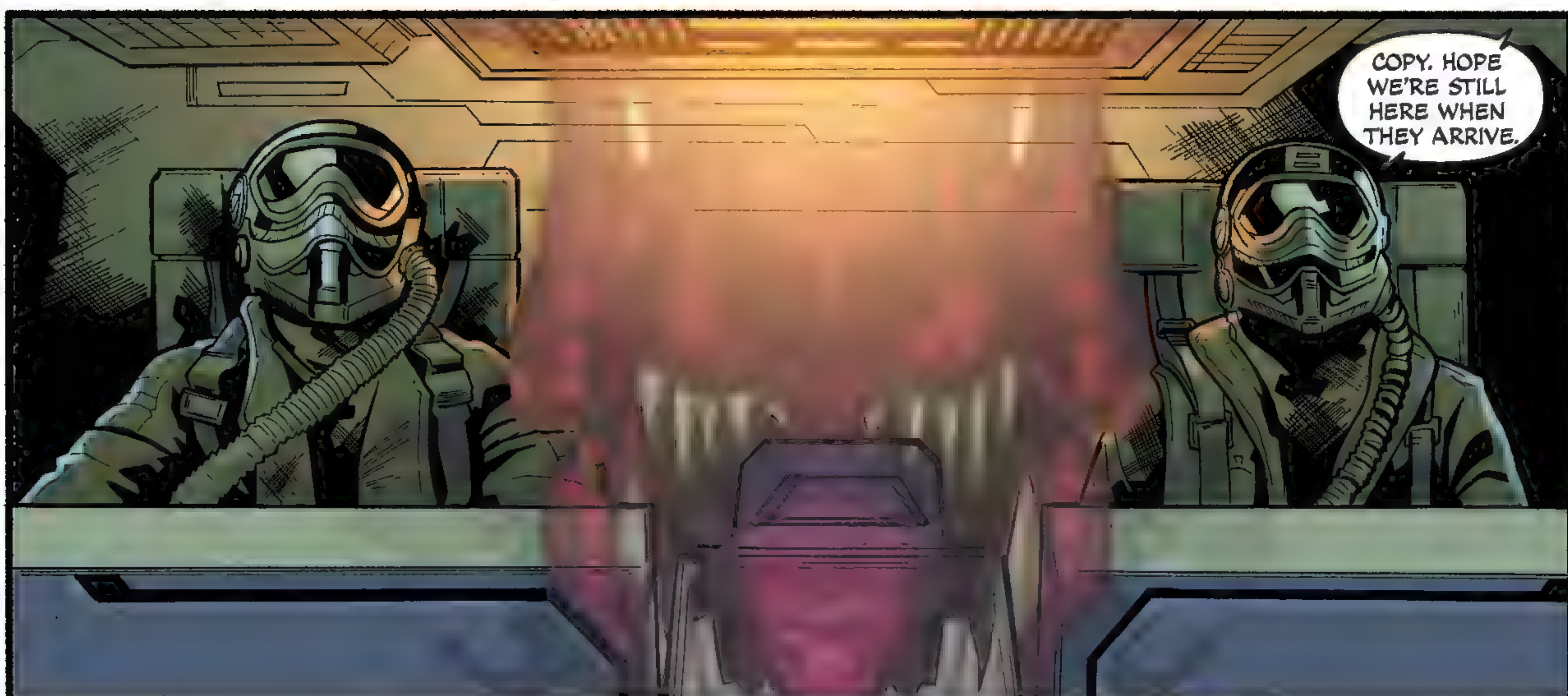
THE
WHOLE
BUILDING
IS DEAD.

DON'T BE
SCARED. THIS ISN'T
ABOUT SOME
GREAT DARKNESS
ENGULFING YOUR
WORLD.

IT'S ABOUT
THE LIGHT.

"DESTRUCTIVE
LIGHT, BUT LIGHT
NONETHELESS."

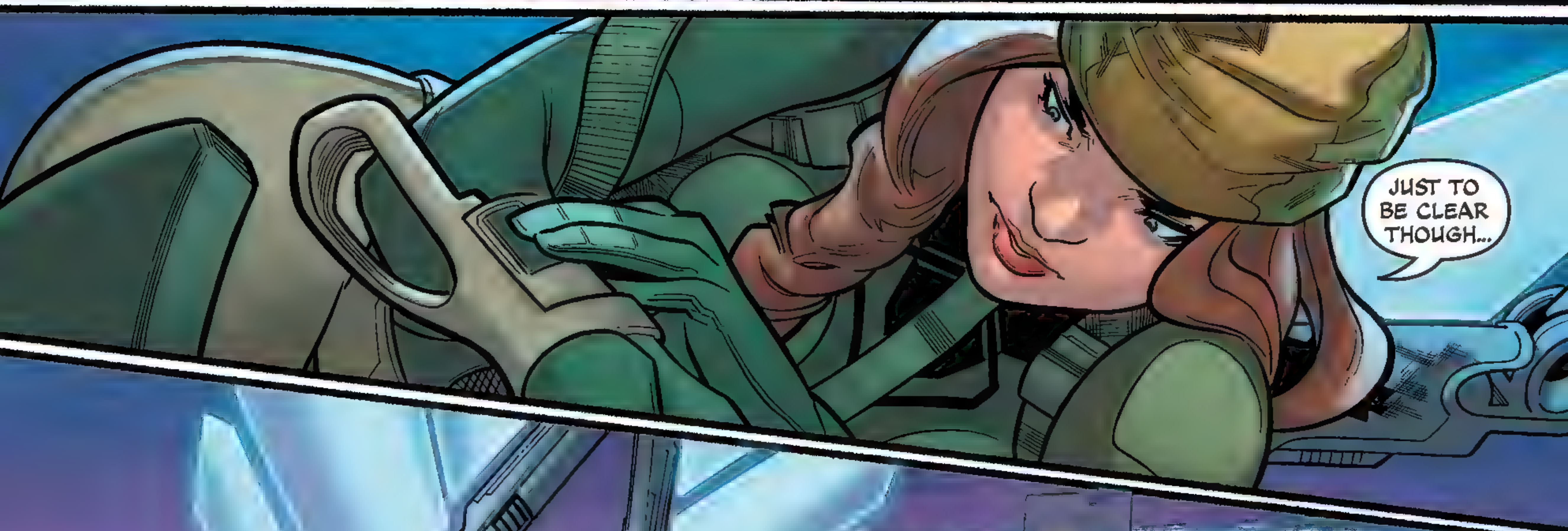








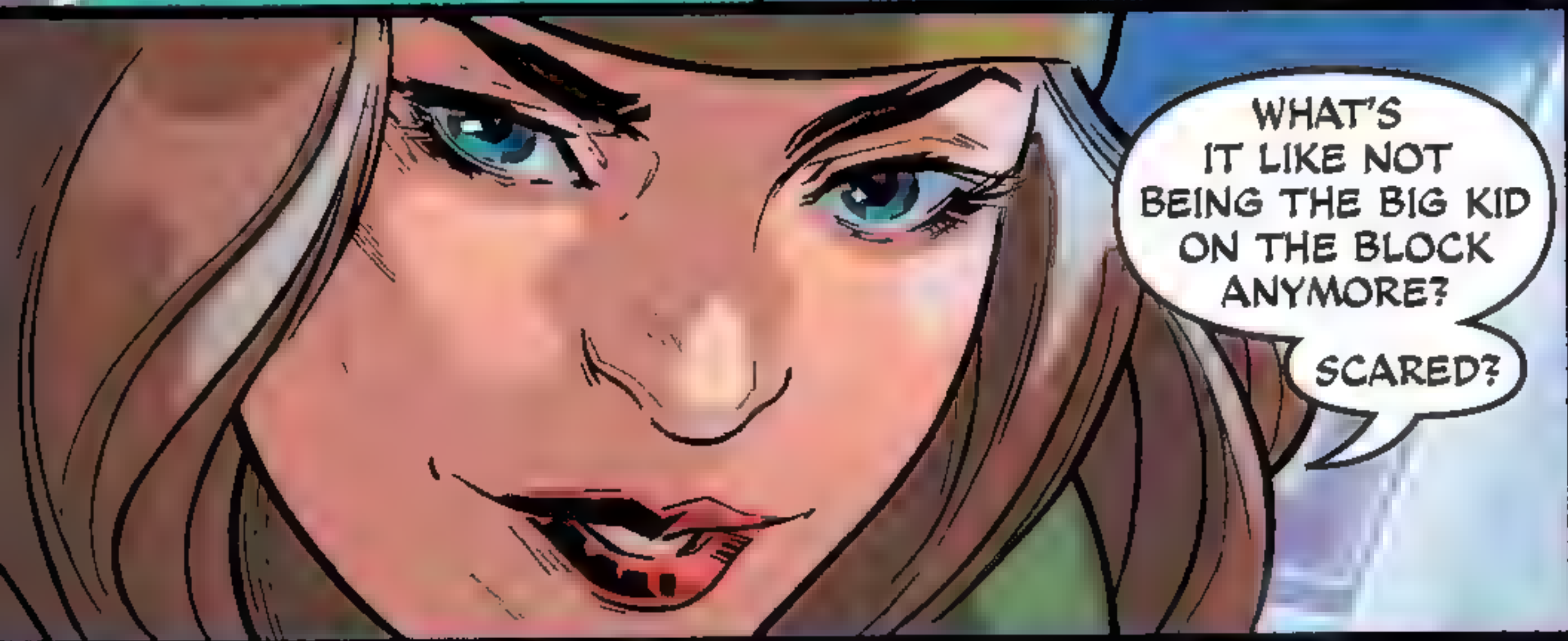
QUITE THE
STANDOFF, GRACE. MAYBE,
YOU'D FARE BETTER GOING UP
AGAINST SOMEONE YOUR
OWN SIZE.



JUST TO
BE CLEAR
THOUGH...



...I WASN'T
TALKING
ABOUT ME.



WHAT'S
IT LIKE NOT
BEING THE BIG KID
ON THE BLOCK
ANYMORE?

SCARED?



FEAR NEVER
CONTROLS
MY HEART,
BLACKJACK.

NO. BUT,
ANGER SURE
DOES.



LOOK AT YOURSELF, GRACE. HELPING RAINIER DESTROY THIS CITY. AND, YOU DAMN NEAR KILLED BENOIST WITH YOUR CRAZY MAGIC BEFORE. DO YOU EVEN CARE?

I DO. BUT, IT DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.

MAYBE NOT FOR YOU, BUT IT DOES FOR ME.

IT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

TO BE CONTINUED



VOL. 8
COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE

#3
OF 6



J.T. KRUL
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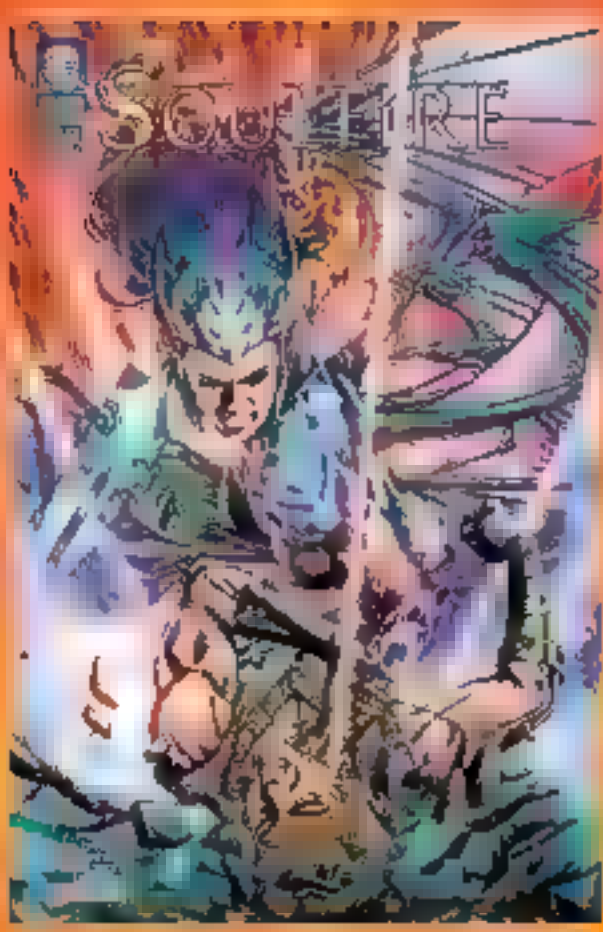


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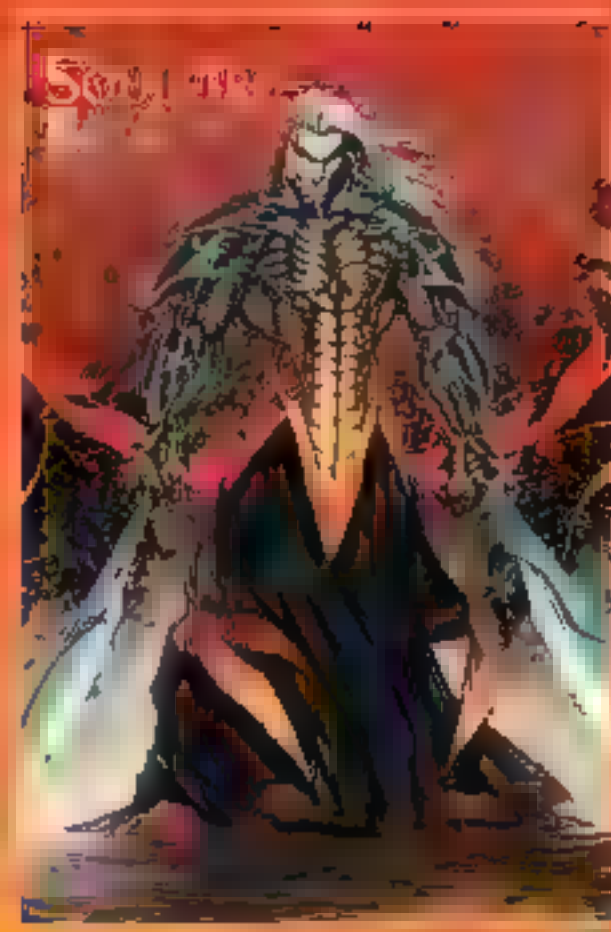
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“POWERPLAY”

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Soulfire Vol. 8 Issue 3
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IN THE OLD AGE, **RAINIER** WAS PART OF **THE NAITALI**, A HUMANOID RACE CONNECTED TO THE DRAGONS THEMSELVES. STRONG AND POWERFUL.

BUT ALSO FEARED BY OTHERS. CONSIDERED TO BE A REFLECTION NOT OF THE MAJESTIC BEAST IN THE SKIES, BUT OF THE DEMONIC NATURE OF THE DARK. THEY WERE MORE THAN SHUNNED. THEY WERE HUNTED. KILLED. SLAUGHTERED.

RAINIER WAS ONE SUCH VICTIM. TORTURED AND MUTILATED.

BUT, HIS SPIRIT REFUSED TO DIE. HE ENDURED.

RAINIER ROSE UP TO POWER ONCE MORE, USING THE MIGHT OF MAGIC TO STRIKE OUT AT THE WORLD THAT HAD TRIED TO KILL HIM.

IT WAS A WAR THAT RAVAGED THE LANDS UNTIL THE END OF THE LAST GREAT AGE OF MAGIC.

AFTER THAT, **RAINIER** THOUGHT HE FOUND A POWER GREATER THAN MAGIC IN TECHNOLOGY. OVER THE CENTURIES, HE BUILT HIMSELF A NEW BODY AND AN EMPIRE, AS HE SOUGHT TO DO EVERYTHING HE COULD TO SEE THAT MAGIC NEVER RETURNED.

EVENTUALLY, **RAINIER** REALIZED THAT THE ONLY WAY TO FIND HIS TRUE POWER WAS TO RECLAIM HIS HERITAGE AND HIS CONNECTION TO THE MAGIC.

AND SO, HE TURNED AWAY FROM TECHNOLOGY AND EMBRACED THE MAGIC ITSELF IN ORDER TO BE REBORN-- A NAITALI ONCE MORE.



SAN FRANCISCO.

SAFE TO SAY GRACE IS OFFICIALLY UNHINGED. IT'S BAD ENOUGH THAT SHE'S SIDED WITH RAINIER OF ALL PEOPLE. BUT NOW, SHE'S USING HIS TACTICS.

ATTACKING CITIES. FRYING THEIR ELECTRICAL GRID. LEAVING THEM HELPLESS.

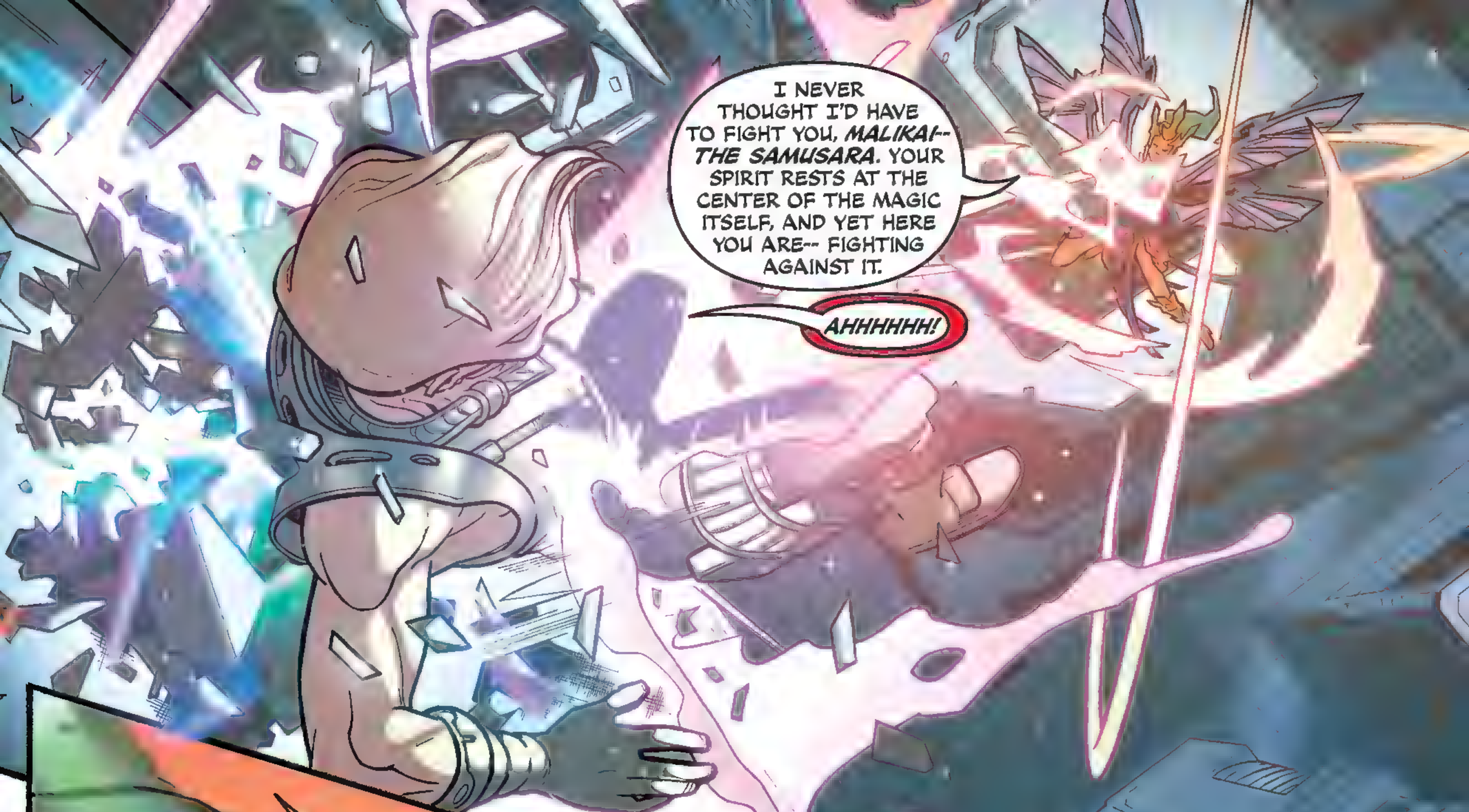


BUT, SHE WASN'T ABLE TO TAKE AWAY ALL THE POWER IN THE CITY.

OPEN YOUR EYES, GRACE. HOW CAN YOU THINK YOU ARE SAVING LIVES BY TAKING SO MANY?

I'M NOT TRYING TO SAVE THIS LIFE OR THAT LIFE.

I'M FIGHTING FOR LIFE ITSELF.
FOR THE MAGIC.

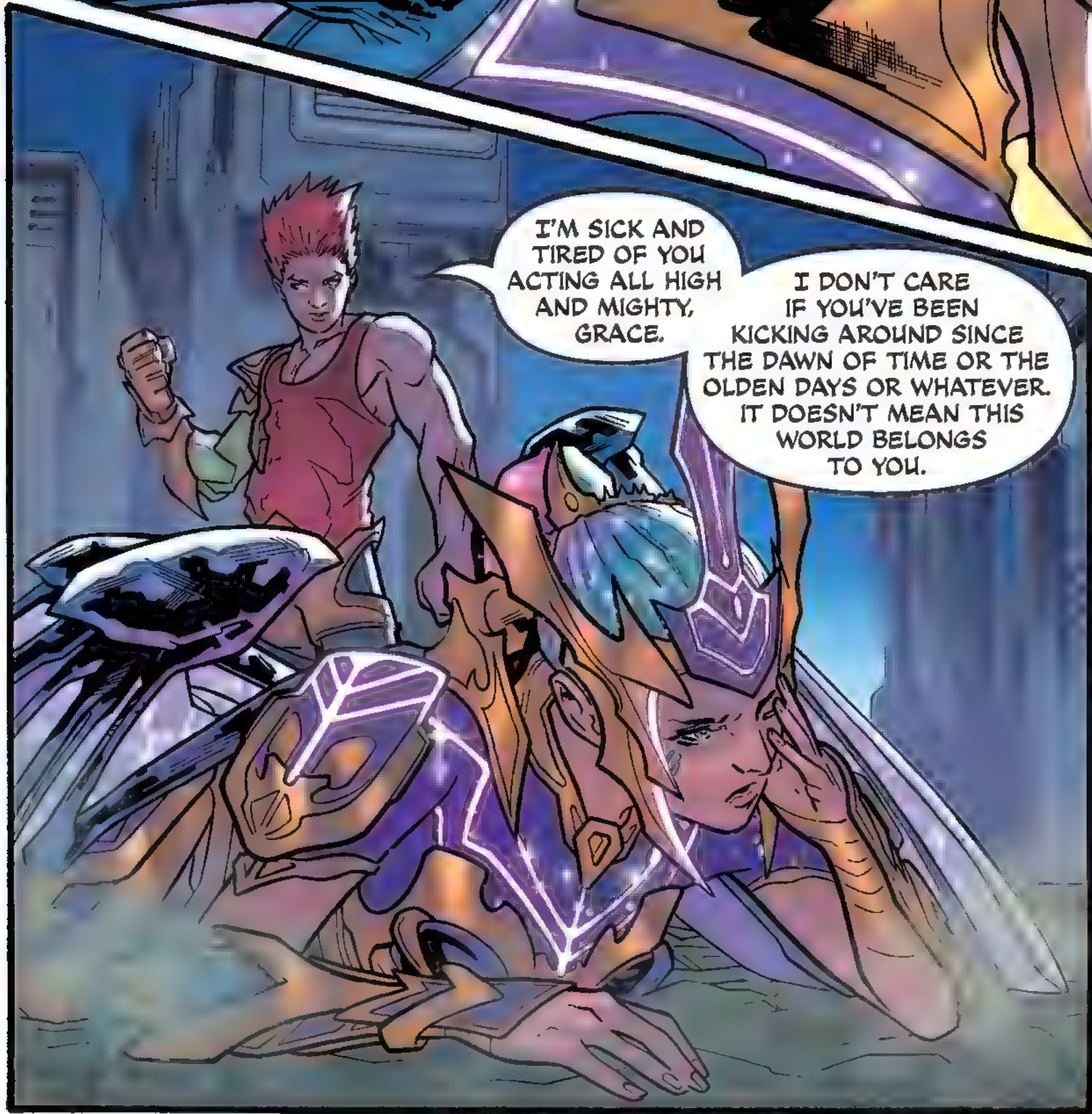


I NEVER
THOUGHT I'D HAVE
TO FIGHT YOU, *MALIKAI--
THE SAMUSARA*. YOUR
SPIRIT RESTS AT THE
CENTER OF THE MAGIC
ITSELF, AND YET HERE
YOU ARE-- FIGHTING
AGAINST IT.

AHHHHHH!



ENOUGH!



I'M SICK AND
TIRED OF YOU
ACTING ALL HIGH
AND MIGHTY,
GRACE.

I DON'T CARE
IF YOU'VE BEEN
KICKING AROUND SINCE
THE DAWN OF TIME OR THE
OLDEN DAYS OR WHATEVER.
IT DOESN'T MEAN THIS
WORLD BELONGS
TO YOU.

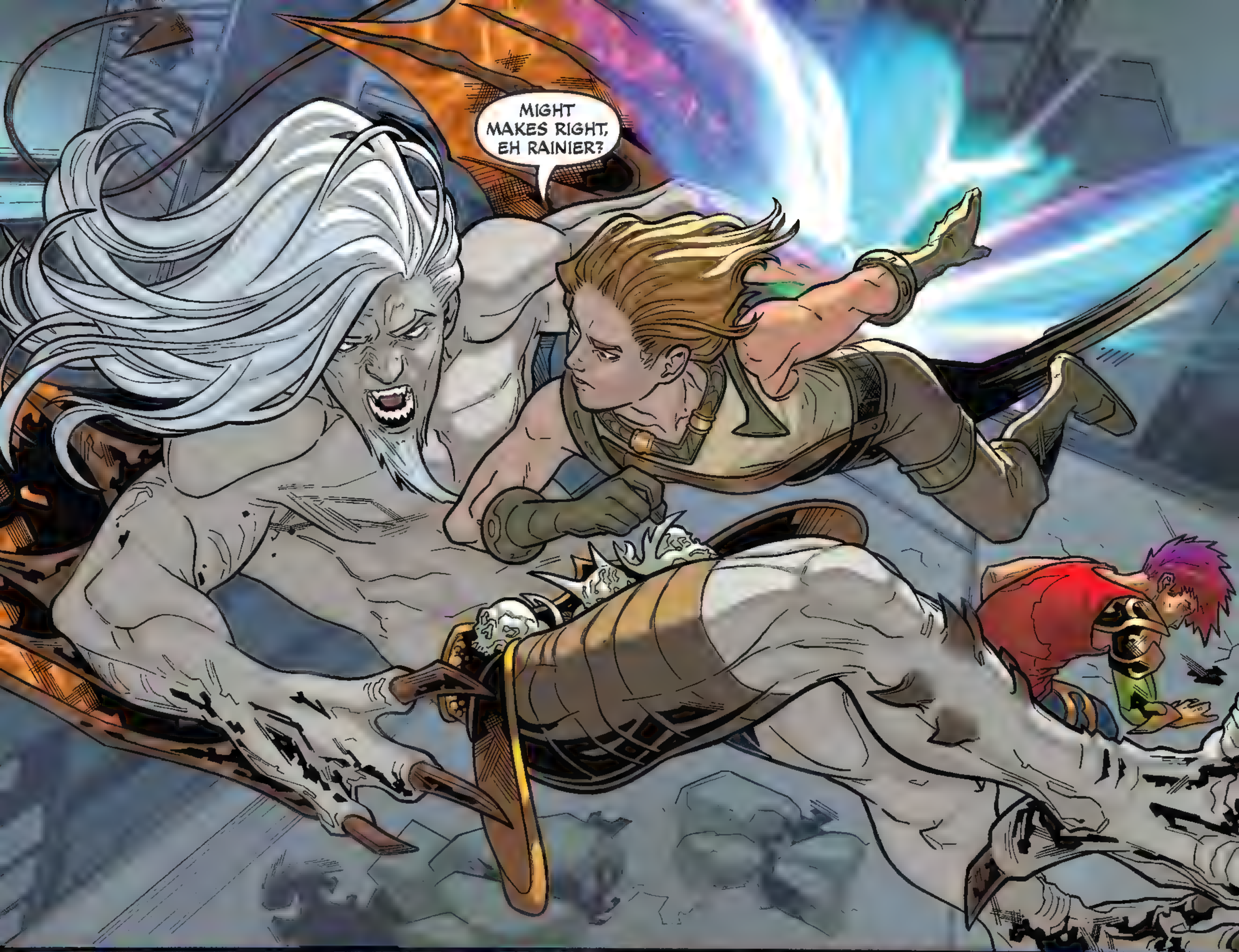


YOU THINK
THE WORLD
BELONGS TO
YOU THEN,
BOY?



IT BELONGS
TO THOSE WHO
HAVE THE WILL
TO TAKE IT.

AHHHHH!



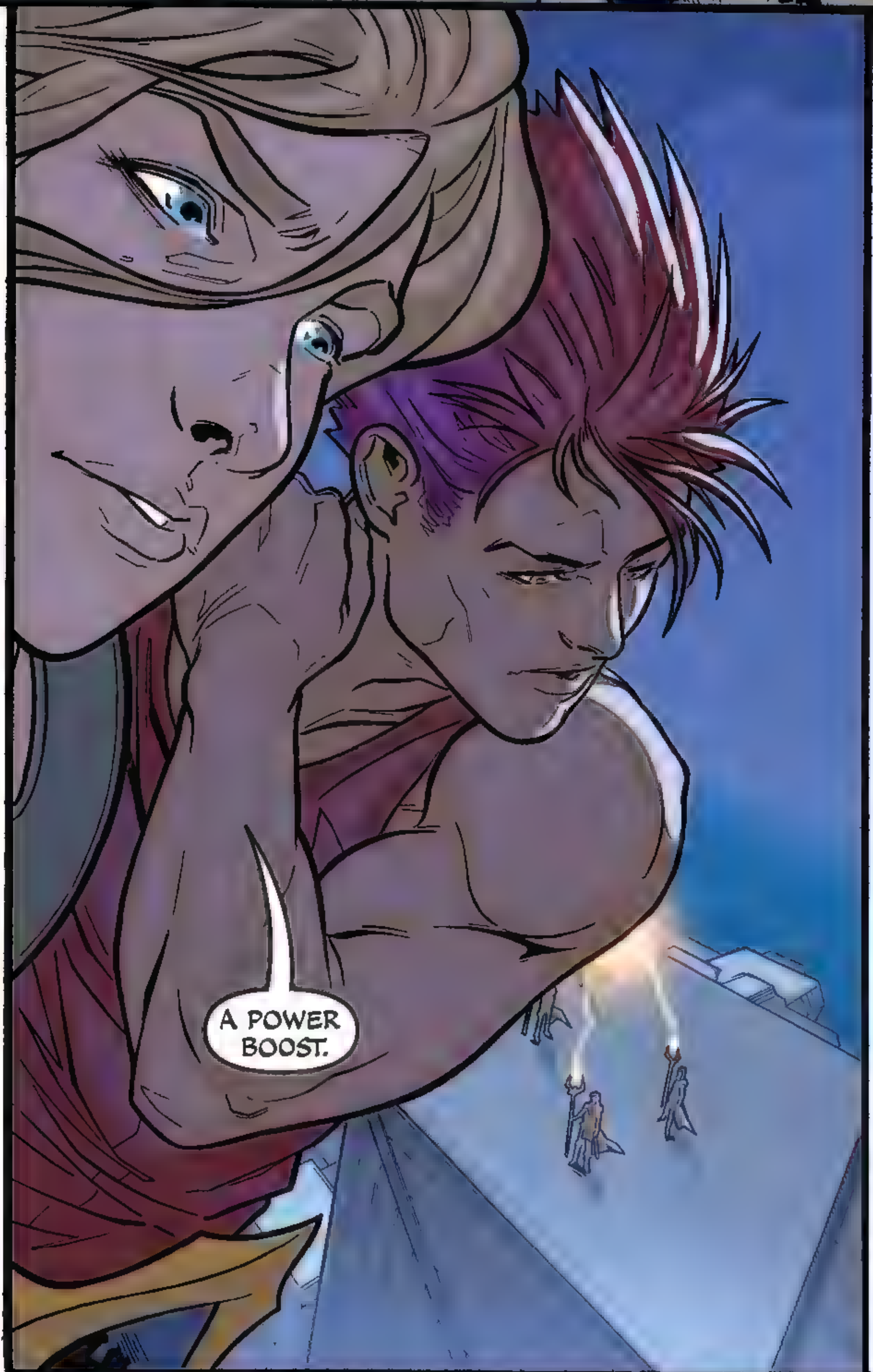
MIGHT
MAKES RIGHT,
EH RAINIER?



P.J., YOU
OKAY?

S-S-S-URE.
J-J-JUST
PEACHY.

THIS ISN'T
WORKING. WE NEED
A NEW STRATEGY.
SOMETHING TO TIP
THE SCALES IN
OUR FAVOR.



A POWER
BOOST.

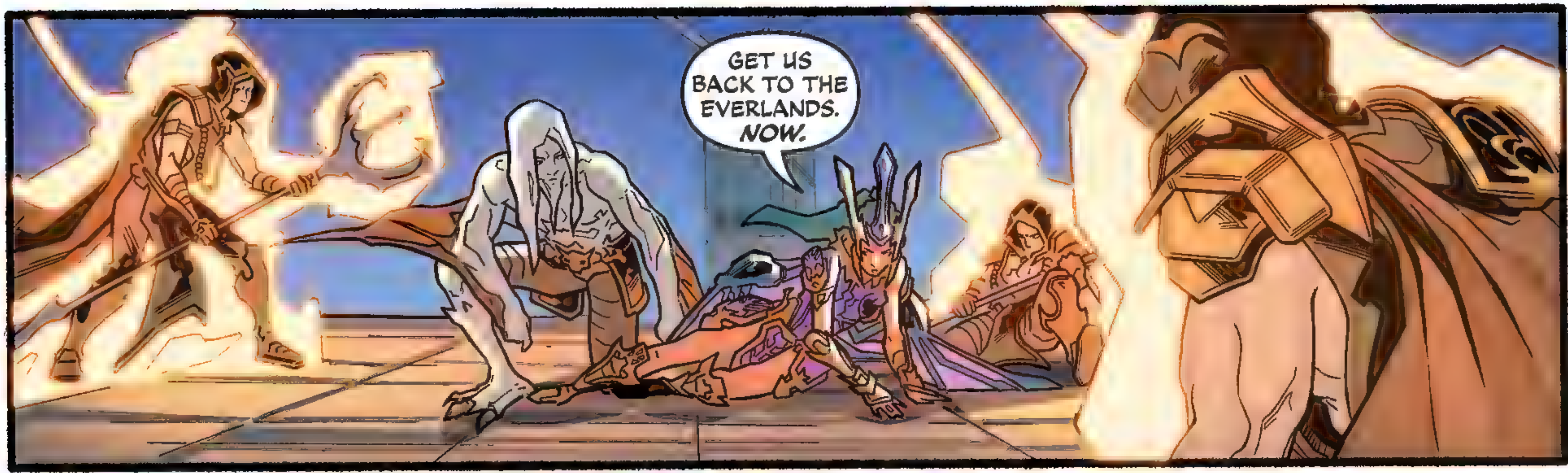




WHAT IN
GOD'S NAME
WAS THAT,
P.J.?

OH,
NOTHING.
JUST THE
USUAL.

MAL
SAVING
THE DAY.
AGAIN.



GET US
BACK TO THE
EVERLANDS.
NOW.



CONSIDERING THE FIREPOWER THEY HAD, I'D SAY IT COULD HAVE BEEN A LOT WORSE. WE'RE LUCKY THE ENTIRE CITY ISN'T IN RUINS.

DOES THIS LOOK LIKE LUCK TO YOU?

WE STOPPED THEIR ATTACK, DIDN'T WE?

THAT'S ONE WAY TO LOOK AT IT. ANOTHER WAY IS TO SAY YOU LET THEM GET AWAY ONCE THE DAMAGE WAS DONE.



THE QUESTION IS-- GET AWAY TO WHERE, MALIKAI?

I DON'T KNOW.

NOW, WHY DO I FEEL LIKE I DON'T BELIEVE YOU?



SERIOUSLY? WE'RE SUPPOSED TO CARE ABOUT HOW YOU FEEL?

IT'D BE NICE TO KNOW YOUR HEARTS ARE IN THIS THING.



IF BY THIS THING YOU MEAN THIS WAR THAT'S BREWING, THEN NO. WE'RE NOT. GRACE IS MISGUIDED AND OUT OF CONTROL, BUT WHOSE TO SAY YOU'RE ANY BETTER, *CORDELLA*? YOU WERE FINE BRINGING YOUR BIG TOYS SMASHING AROUND HERE TO STOP HER.

I DIDN'T PICK THE BATTLEFIELD. SHE DID. AND, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THIS ISN'T THE KIND OF SITUATION WHERE YOU CAN SIT ON THE SIDELINES.



I'M NOT. I'M TRYING TO STOP BOTH OF YOU.

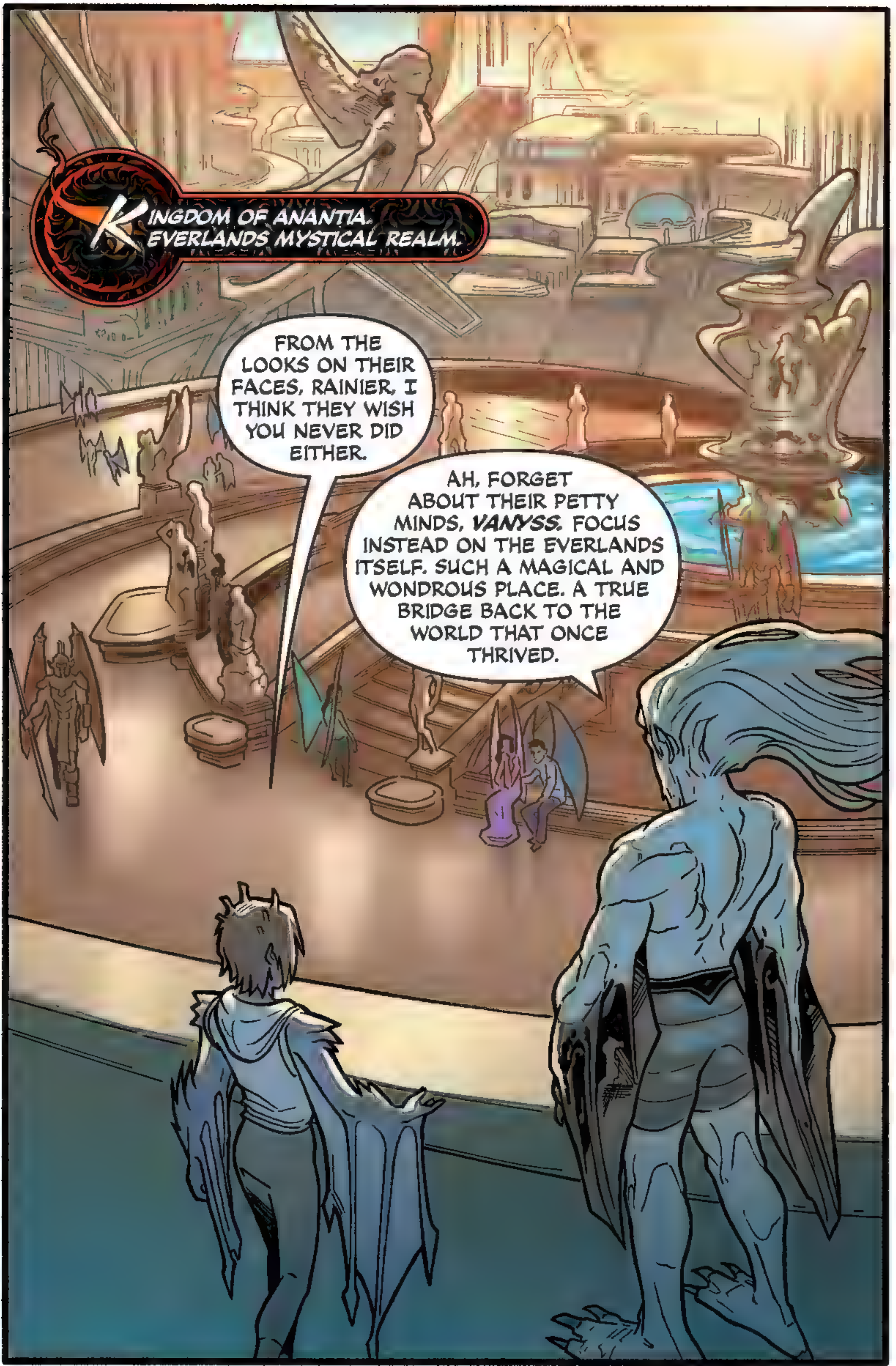
ARE WE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGHT YOU, TOO?

THAT DEPENDS...

...ON WHERE YOU GO FROM HERE.



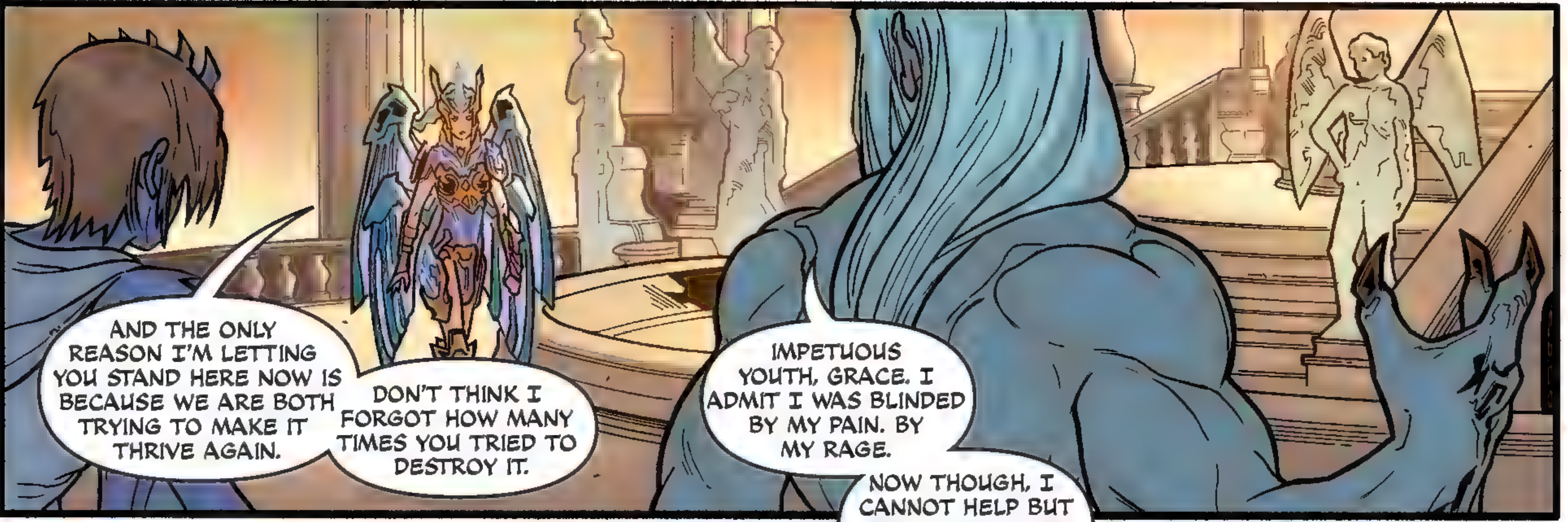
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D LOOK OUT TO SUCH A SIGHT AGAIN IN MY LIFE.



KINGDOM OF ANANTIA.
EVERLANDS MYSTICAL REALM.

FROM THE LOOKS ON THEIR FACES, RAINIER, I THINK THEY WISH YOU NEVER DID EITHER.

AH, FORGET ABOUT THEIR PETTY MINDS, *VANYSS*. FOCUS INSTEAD ON THE EVERLANDS ITSELF. SUCH A MAGICAL AND WONDROUS PLACE. A TRUE BRIDGE BACK TO THE WORLD THAT ONCE THRIVED.

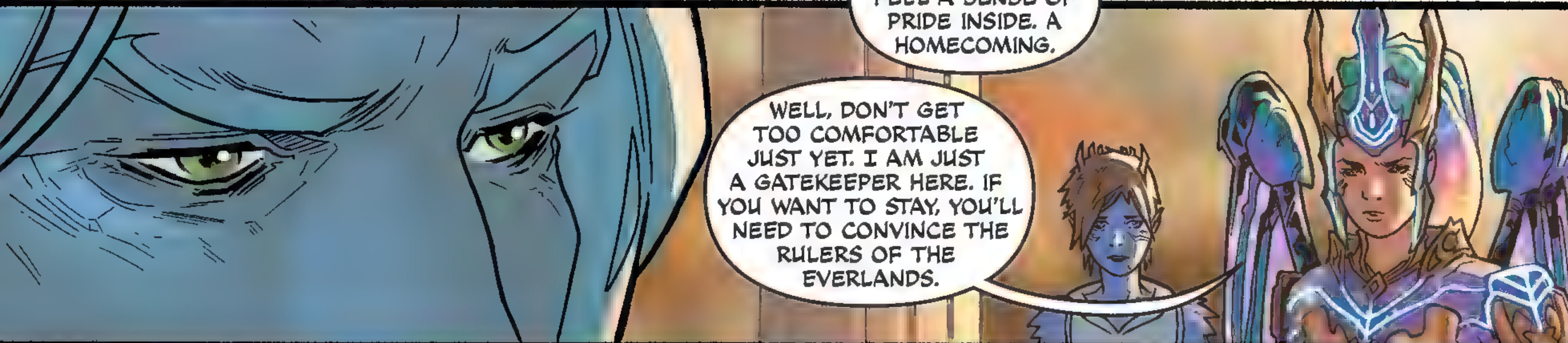


AND THE ONLY REASON I'M LETTING YOU STAND HERE NOW IS BECAUSE WE ARE BOTH TRYING TO MAKE IT THRIVE AGAIN.

DON'T THINK I FORGOT HOW MANY TIMES YOU TRIED TO DESTROY IT.

IMPETUOUS YOUTH, GRACE. I ADMIT I WAS BLINDED BY MY PAIN. BY MY RAGE.

NOW THOUGH, I CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL A SENSE OF PRIDE INSIDE. A HOMECOMING.



WELL, DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE JUST YET. I AM JUST A GATEKEEPER HERE. IF YOU WANT TO STAY, YOU'LL NEED TO CONVINCE THE RULERS OF THE EVERLANDS.

"AND THEIR HEARTS
MAY NOT BE AS
WARM AS MINE."

RAINIER AND
HIS KIND HAVE NO
PLACE HERE IN ANANTIA!
EXCEPT PERHAPS LOCKED
AWAY IN THE DUNGEONS
WITH *ONYX*. NEED I
REMINDE YOU OF
HIS CRIMES?

I UNDERSTAND
YOUR ANGER, *SARIN*.
BELIEVE ME, NOBODY HAS
FOUGHT AGAINST RAINIER
LONGER THAN I HAVE.
WE ARE ETERNAL
ENEMIES.

AND YET,
YOU BRING HIM
HERE BEFORE US
UNSHACKLED. AND ASK
US TO EMBRACE
HIM LIKE A
BROTHER.

NOT
AT ALL,
FAYE.

BUT THIS WAR
WE FIGHT IS NOT AMONG
ONE KINGDOM OR ANOTHER.
IT'S NOT ABOUT *THE RAHTUMI*
OR *THE SETHORU* OR *THE*
NAITALI. IT IS ABOUT
THE MAGIC.

IF WE ARE
TO HAVE A FUTURE--
EVEN ONE THAT WE MAY
EVENTUALLY FIGHT OVER--
WE MUST FIRST ENSURE THAT
WE HAVE THAT WORLD OF
MAGIC. AND TO DO THAT,
WE MUST STAND
TOGETHER.

GRACE IS RIGHT.
THOSE IN THE WORLD
OUTSIDE ARE THE ONES
WHO HAVE FORGOTTEN. I
KNOW WHAT THAT'S LIKE.
FOR A TIME, I LOST
MY WAY.

THEY HAVE
ABANDONED THE VERY
POWER THAT IS RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE UNIVERSE ITSELF. THEY
ARE BLINDED BY THEIR OWN
LIMITATIONS-- THEIR OWN
TECHNOLOGY.

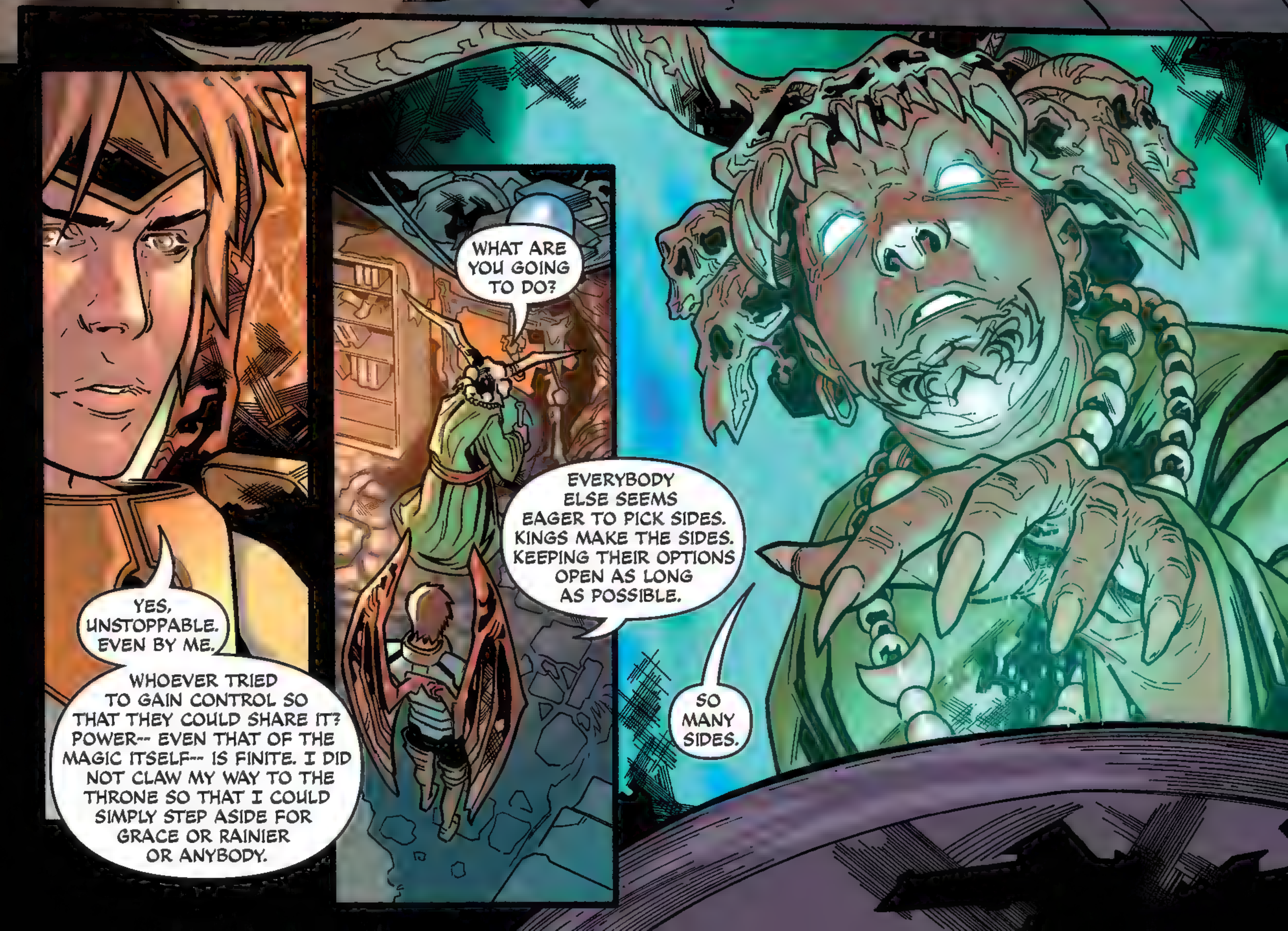
THEY
MUST BE
REMINDED WHAT
THAT TRUE POWER
LOOKS LIKE. WE
MUST SHOW
THEM.

OH,
MUST
WE?



DID YOU HEAR THEM ALL, *VISABA*? MAGIC THIS AND POWER THAT. SO MUCH AMBITION AND MACHINATIONS IN ONE ROOM.

I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT FIND IT REFRESHING, MY KING. SUCH A UNION COULD PROVE TO BE AN UNSTOPPABLE FORCE.



YES, UNSTOPPABLE. EVEN BY ME.

WHOEVER TRIED TO GAIN CONTROL SO THAT THEY COULD SHARE IT? POWER-- EVEN THAT OF THE MAGIC ITSELF-- IS FINITE. I DID NOT CLAW MY WAY TO THE THRONE SO THAT I COULD SIMPLY STEP ASIDE FOR GRACE OR RAINIER OR ANYBODY.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

EVERYBODY ELSE SEEMS EAGER TO PICK SIDES. KINGS MAKE THE SIDES. KEEPING THEIR OPTIONS OPEN AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

SO MANY SIDES.



SO MANY
OPTIONS.

HELLO,
NISABA. NICE
OF YOU TO
VISIT.

I DON'T SEE
MANY FRIENDLY
FACES DOWN HERE.
COME TO THINK OF
IT, I RARELY
SEE ANY.

AND
WHOSE
FAULT IS
THAT?

I CANNOT
HELP IT IF
MANY FIND ME
INTIMIDATING.

I DO
NOT.

AND, I
DIDN'T COME
TO SHARE
WORDS. WORDS
CAN RING
HOLLOW...



BE MISUNDERSTOOD.
MISINTERPRETED.
OVERHEARD.

SO MUCH
MYSTERY. SO MUCH
SUBTREFUGE I'M
INTRIGUED

PLEASE. THIS IS
ABOUT SO MUCH MORE
THAN YOUR ENTERTAINMENT.
IT IS ABOUT THE NATURE
OF ALL EXISTENCE. WE BOTH
KNOW THE POWERS AT
PLAY AND WHAT AWAITS
OUR DESTINY.

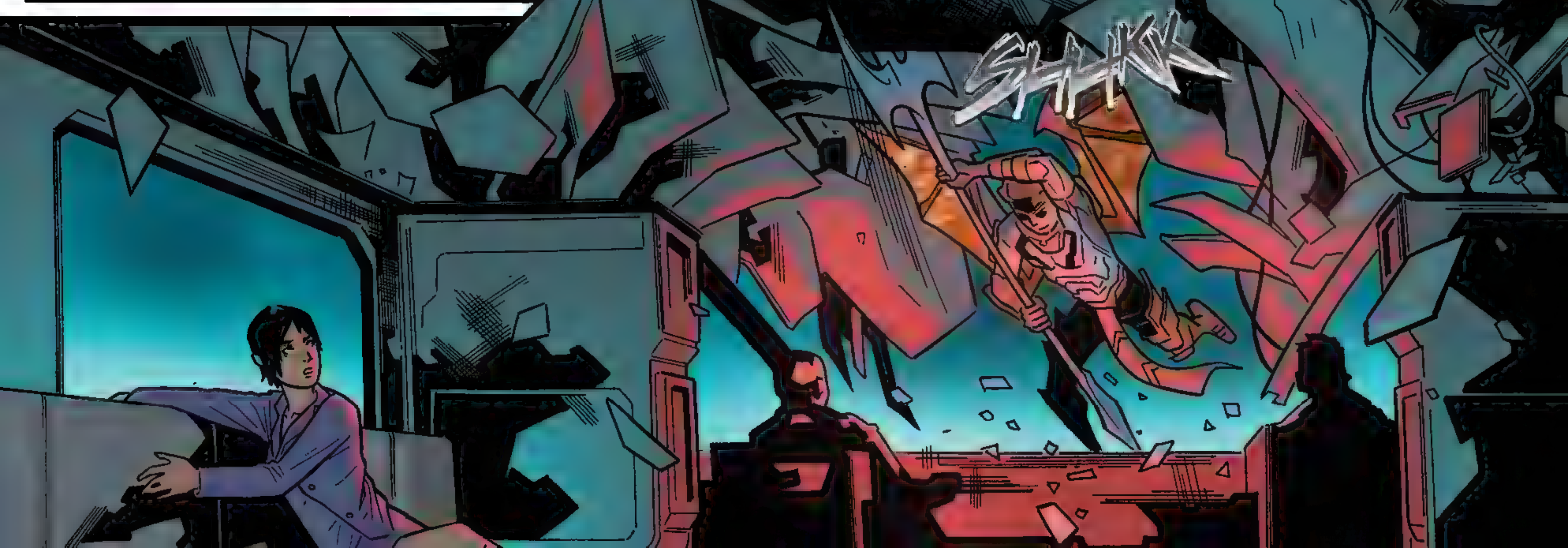
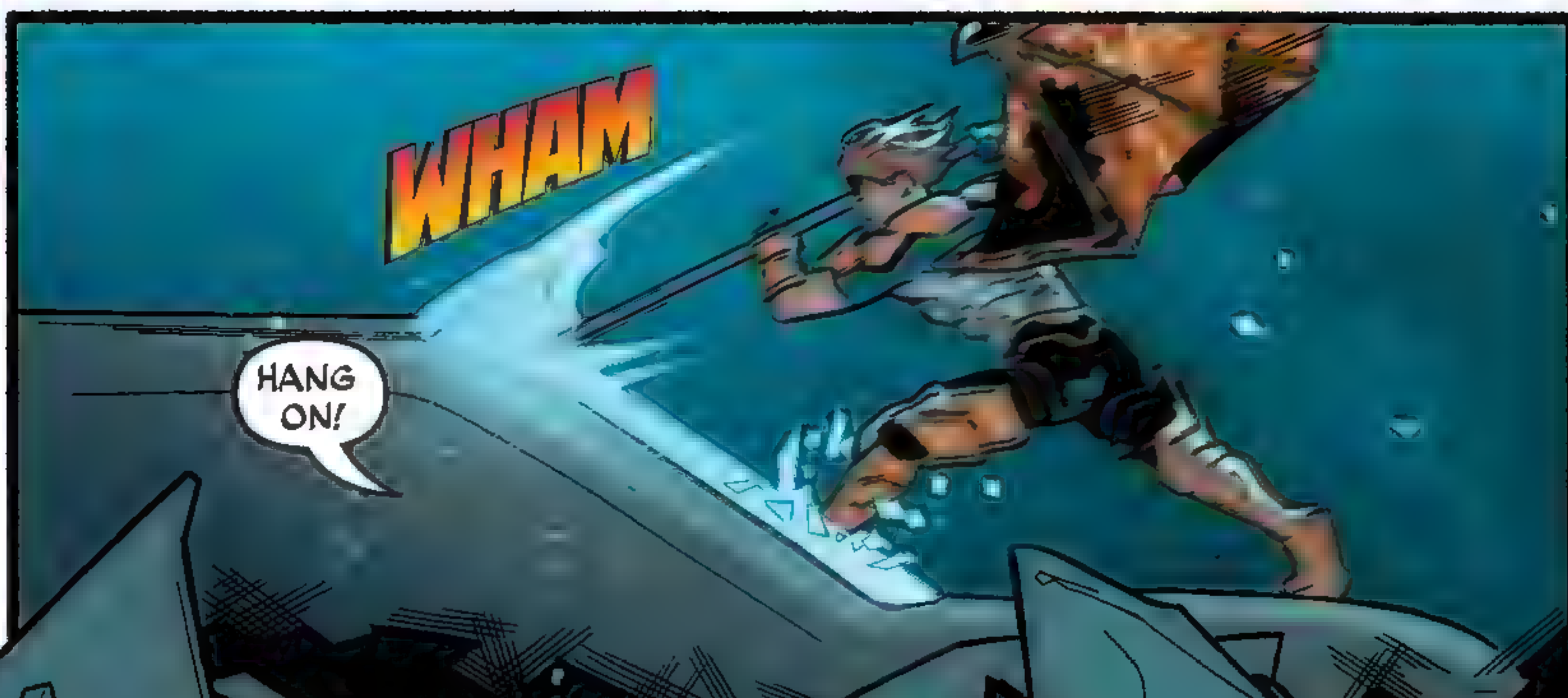
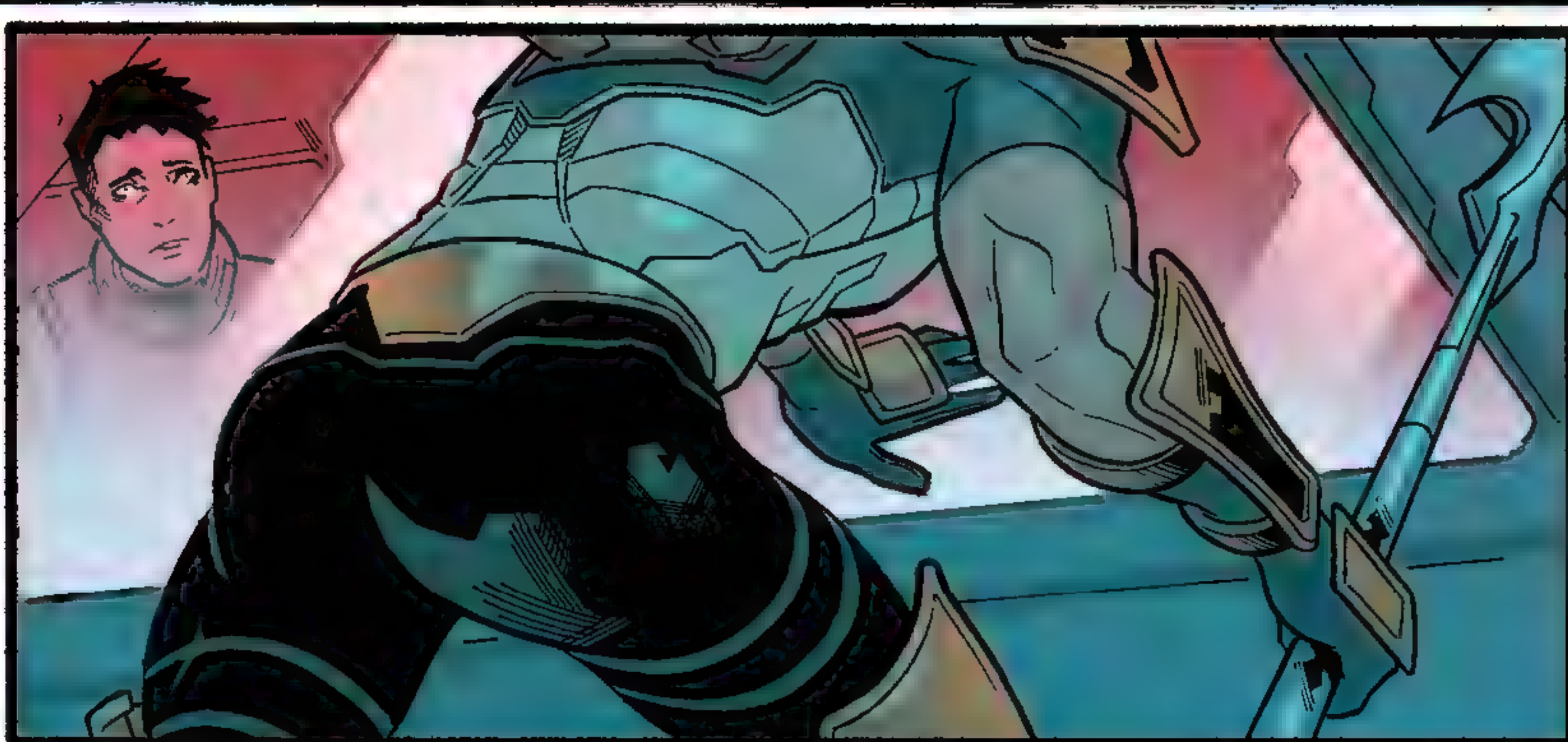
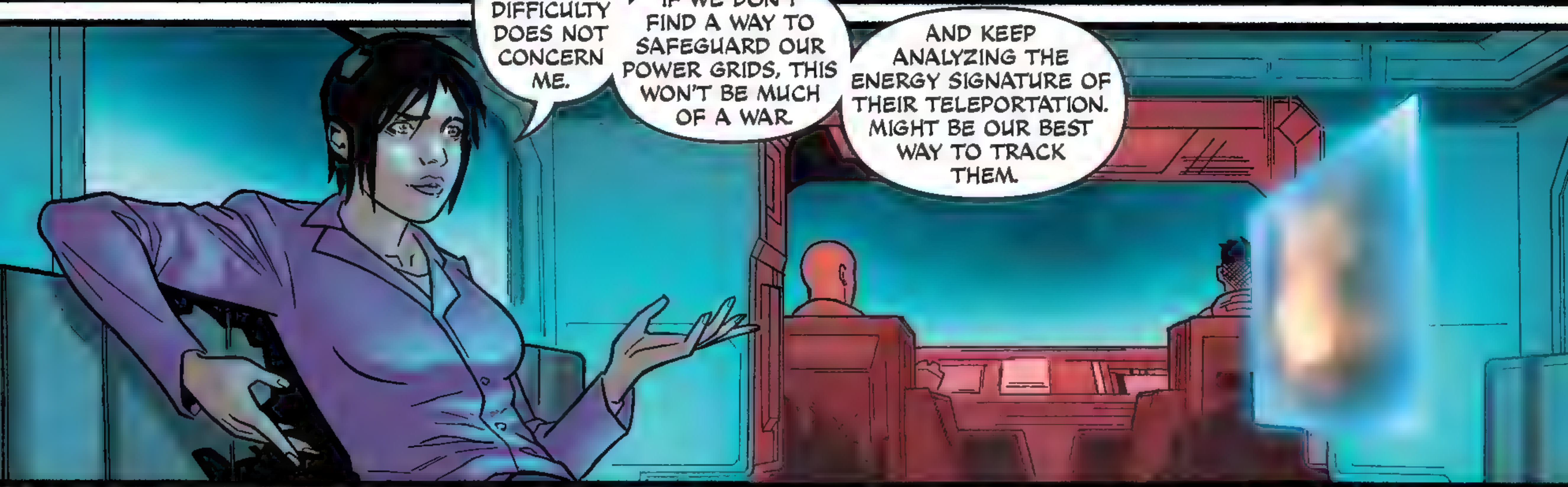
WE
DO?

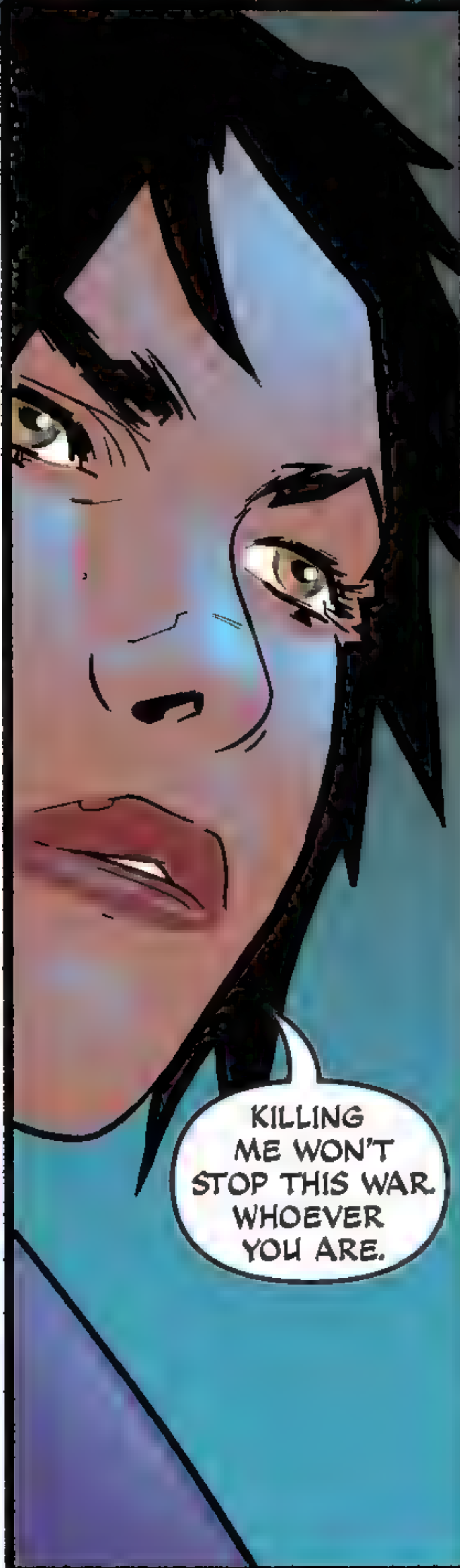
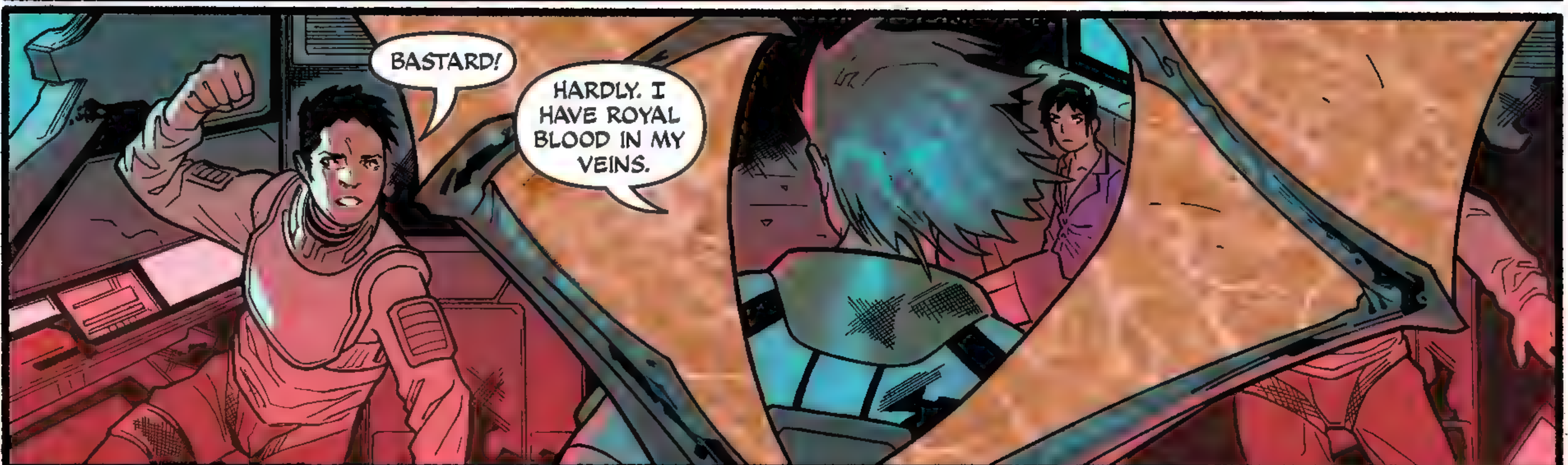
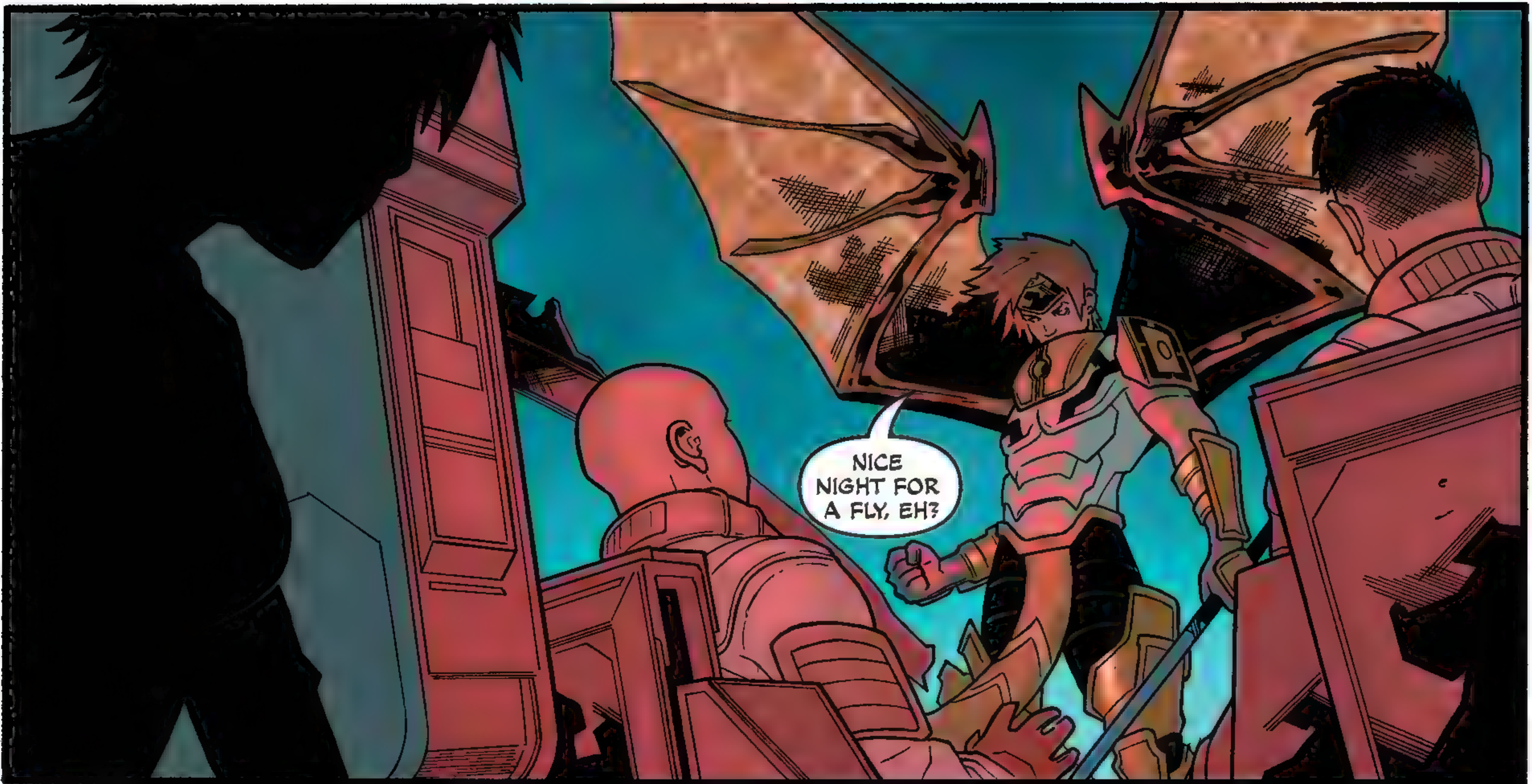
AND YET,
NEITHER ONE OF US
IS FULLY IN CONTROL OF
IT. SUCH CONSTRAINTS
REQUIRE UNWAVERING
PATIENCE.

PATIENCE
AND FAITH. TELL
ME NISABA, ARE
YOU READY?

I'VE SPENT
SO MUCH OF MY LIFE
OPENING DOORWAYS INTO THE
UNKNOWN, BUT NEVER WITHOUT
KNOWING I COULD CLOSE THEM
IF NEEDED. THAT IS A LEAP
I AM NOT PREPARED
TO TAKE.

WELL YOU
KNOW WHERE TO
FIND ME WHEN
YOU DO. WHERE
TO REALLY
FIND ME







YOU NEEDN'T BE SCARED. I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU.

I DON'T SCARE EASILY. BESIDES, IF YOU WANTED ME DEAD, YOU WOULD HAVE LET ME PLUMMET ALONG WITH EVERYONE ELSE ABOARD MY SHIP.

SORRY ABOUT THAT. SOME CONVERSATIONS ARE BEST KEPT UNDER THE STRICTEST OF SECRECY.

WELL, WHATEVER THE CASE, HERE WE ARE. WHO ARE YOU AND WHAT DO YOU WANT?



I TOLD YOU I--

YES, YES. SARIN. KING OF THE EVERLANDS. THAT'S JUST A TITLE. WHAT KIND OF BEINGS ARE YOU? WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?



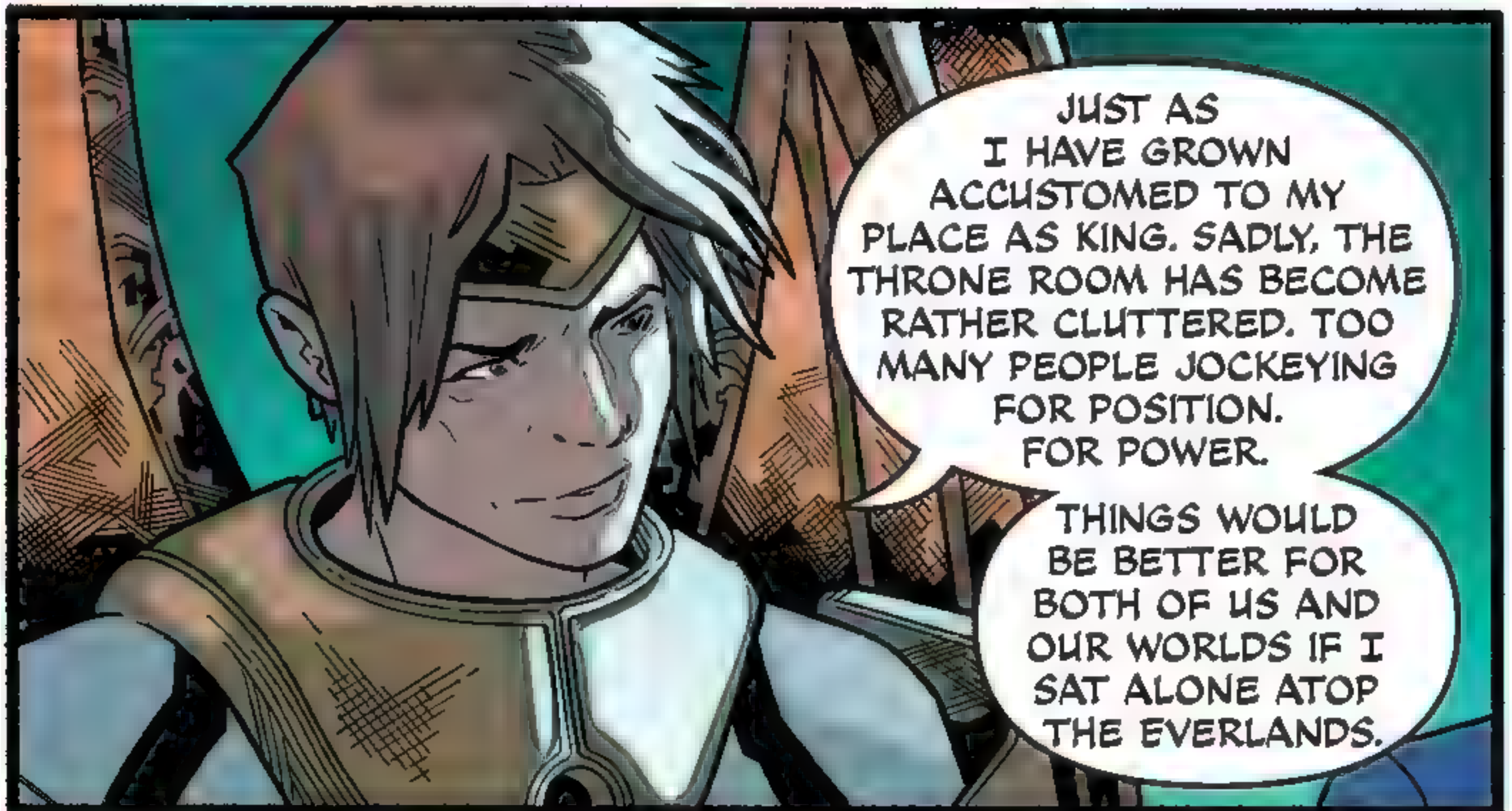
FROM HERE. FROM BEFORE YOU. AS FOR OUR KIND, WE ARE ALL KINDS. ALL CONNECTED TO GREAT POWER YOU AND THE REST OF THE WORLD SEEM INTENT ON IGNORING.

AND, LET ME GUESS. THIS WORLD. OUR WORLD. YOU WANT IT BACK.

THAT'S WHAT THIS WAR IS OVER, ISN'T IT?



YOU'LL EXCUSE US IF WE DON'T JUST HAND IT OVER TO YOU. WE'VE KIND OF GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO IT.



JUST AS I HAVE GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO MY PLACE AS KING. SADLY, THE THRONE ROOM HAS BECOME RATHER CLUTTERED. TOO MANY PEOPLE JOCKEYING FOR POSITION. FOR POWER.

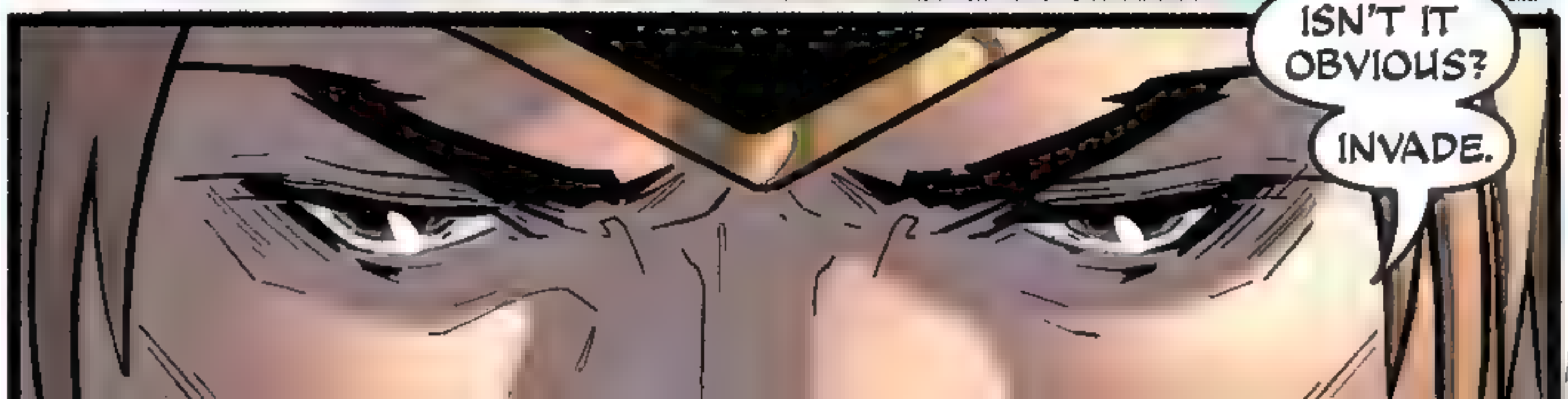
THINGS WOULD BE BETTER FOR BOTH OF US AND OUR WORLDS IF I SAT ALONE ATOP THE EVERLANDS.



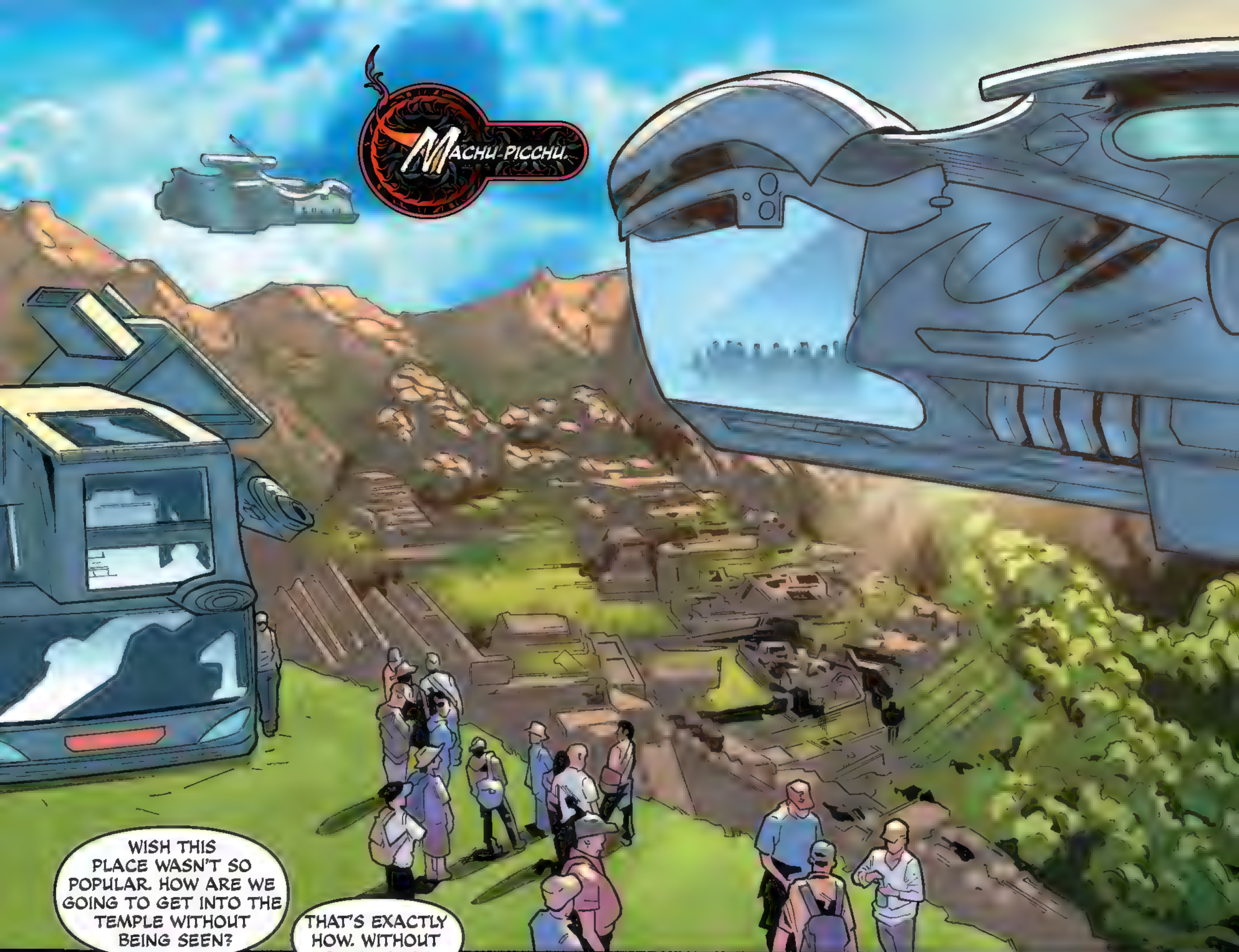
A TRUCE THEN?

YES. BUT FIRST, YOU MUST DO SOMETHING FOR ME?

WHAT'S THAT?

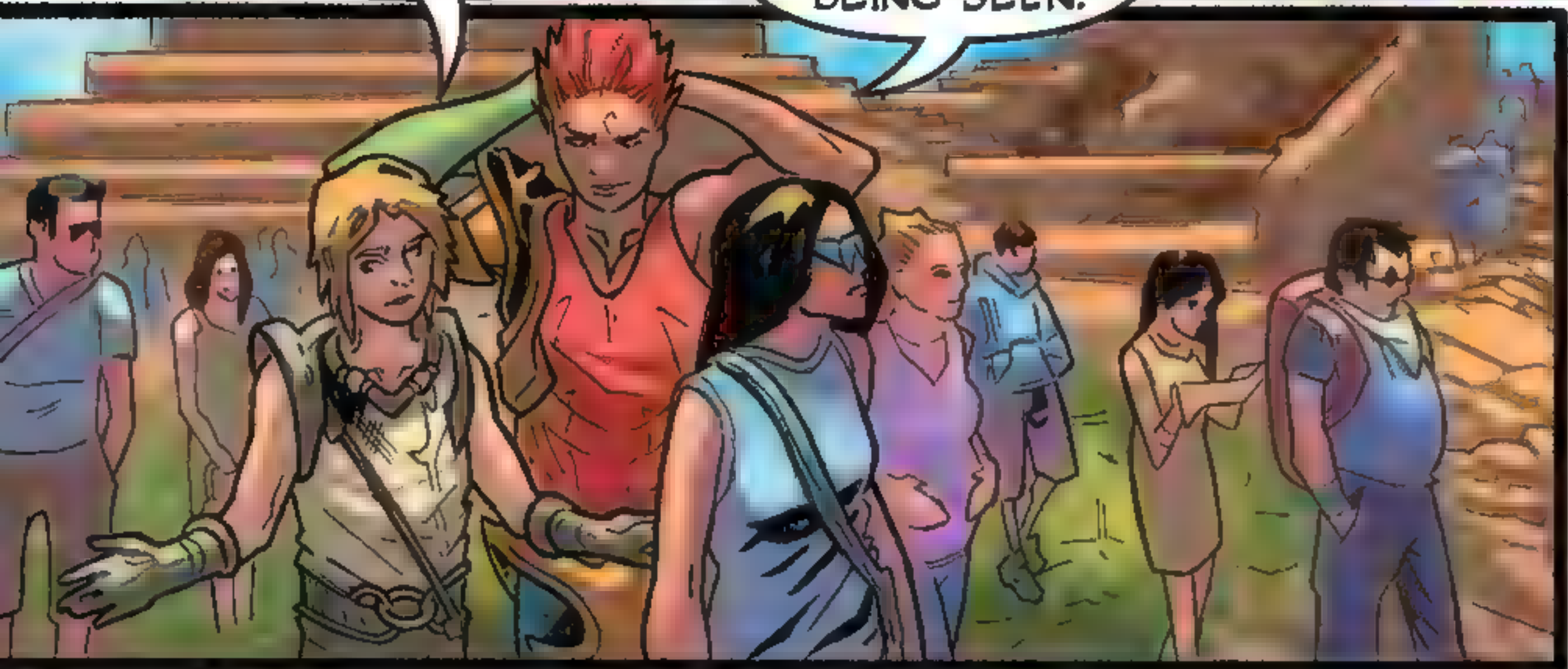


ISN'T IT OBVIOUS? INVADE.



WISH THIS PLACE WASN'T SO POPULAR. HOW ARE WE GOING TO GET INTO THE TEMPLE WITHOUT BEING SEEN?

THAT'S EXACTLY HOW. WITHOUT BEING SEEN.



PUT THIS ON.

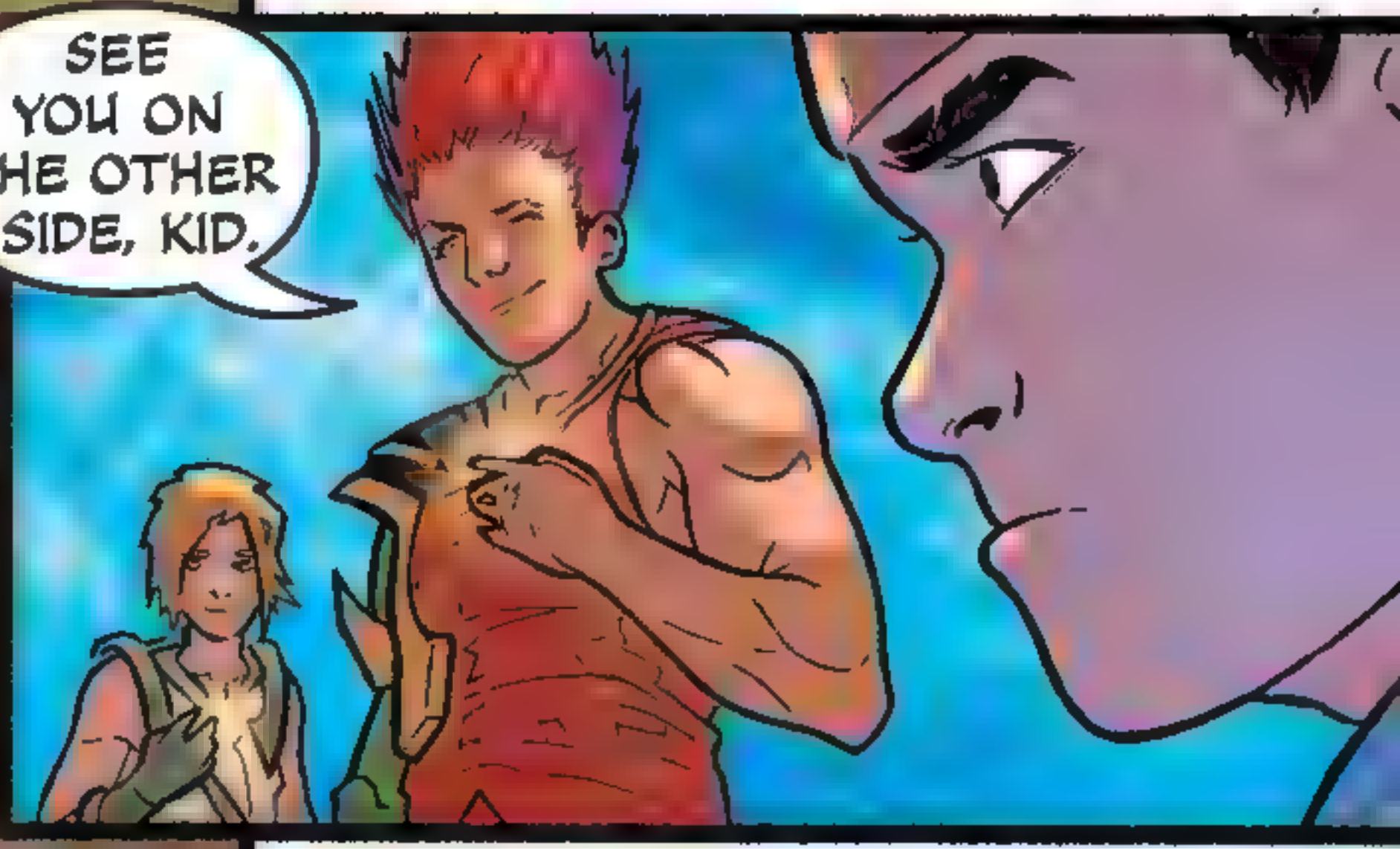
WHAT IS IT?

A CLOAKING DEVICE. BENOIST WAS WORKING ON THESE, BEFORE HE... BACK IN HAWAII.



SHOULD DO THE TRICK NICELY.

SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE, KID.



WHOA...



I KNOW THIS WAS THE RIGHT MOVE, MAL, BUT I DON'T LIKE THE FACT THAT WE LEFT BENOIST WITH THEM IN THAT CONDITION.

ME NEITHER. TRUST ME, WHEN THIS IS ALL DONE, WE'LL GET BACK TO HIM.

GUESS WE DON'T NEED ALL THE CLOAK AND DAGGER STUFF ANYMORE.

TALK ABOUT AN OUT OF BODY EXPERIENCE.

AND, YOU WOULD KNOW, RIGHT?

UNFORTUNATELY, YES.

WHAT'S THE WORD, BUG GUY? GONNA GIVE ME TROUBLE THIS TIME AROUND?

HUH? NO?

GOOD. I'M NOT IN THE MOOD TO PROVE MYSELF OF ANYTHING.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, P.J.

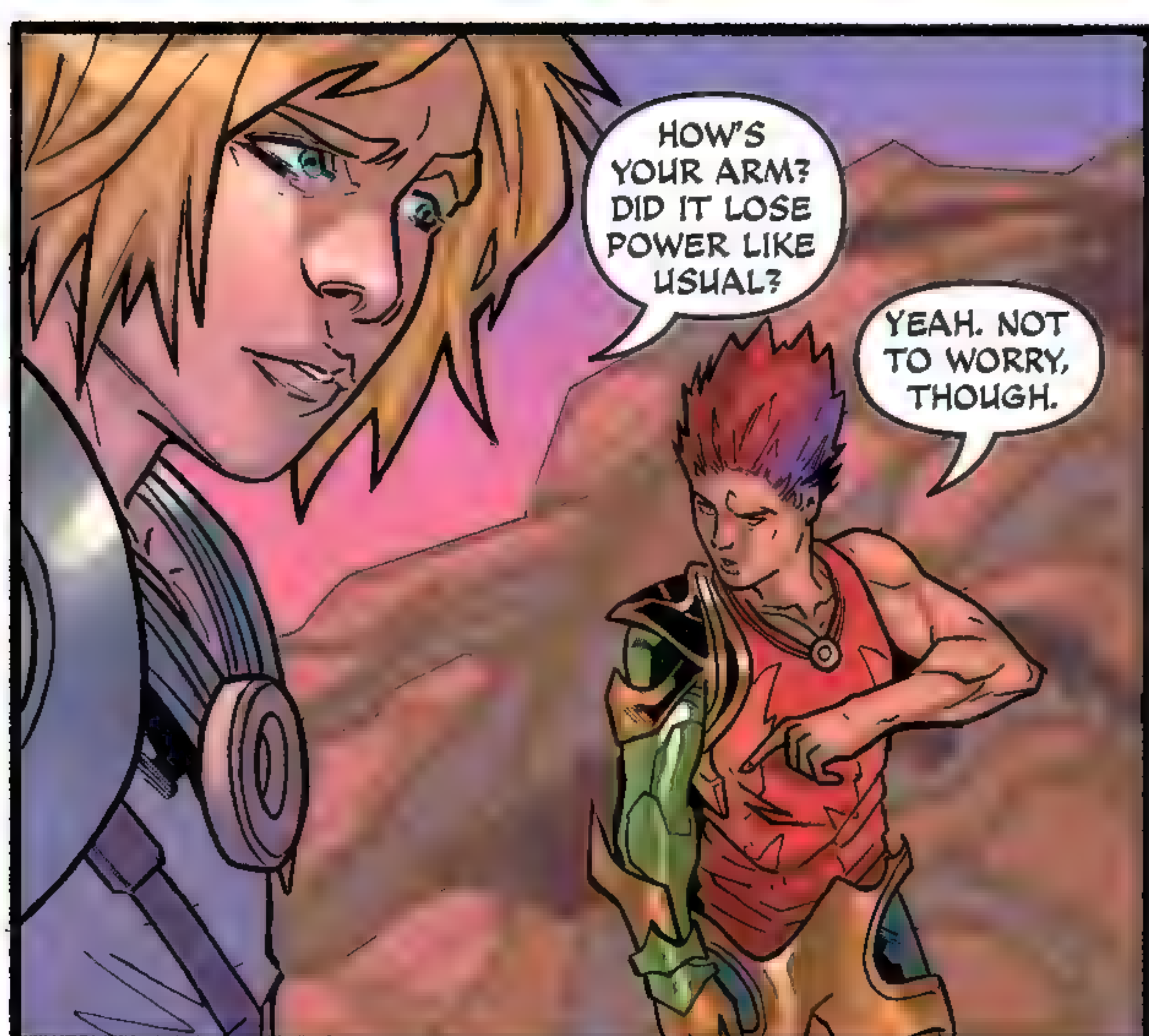
I DON'T WANT TO, MAL. BUT LIKE YOU, I NEED TO.





YOU KNOW, THIS PLACE WOULD SEEM MORE AMAZING IF WE WERE EVER JUST COMING HERE FOR FUN. INSTEAD OF ALWAYS BEING ON SOME DANGEROUS MISSION.

SORRY, P.J. COMES WITH THE GIG.



HOW'S YOUR ARM? DID IT LOSE POWER LIKE USUAL?

YEAH. NOT TO WORRY, THOUGH.



I MADE SURE THIS CYBERTECH HAD A BACK-UP POWER SYSTEM. STREAMLINED. SOLAR. JUST IN CASE.

NOW, JUST NEED TO SEE IF IT WORKS.



HA-HA. LOOK AT THAT.

GOOD AS NEW.

MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY THAT LITTLE VICTORY, BOYS.



BECAUSE,
THE ONLY THING
THAT AWAITS
YOU HERE IS
DEFEAT.

 TO BE
CONTINUED



VOL. 8
COVER A

SOULFIRE

#4
OF 6



J.T. KRUL
RAFFAELE FORTE
SARA IANNIELLO
VALENTINA TADDEO
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VOL. 8
COVER B

WILL CHASELTON'S SOULFIRE

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OF 6



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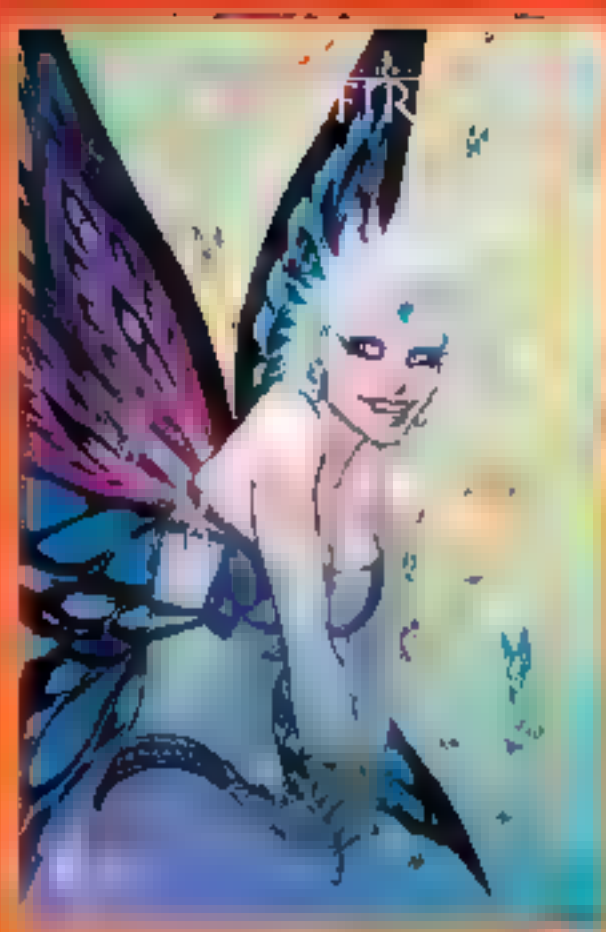
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script

RAFFAELE FORTE
pencils

SARA IANNIELLO
inks

VALENTINA TADDEO (PAGES 1-11, 16-20)
& **JESSE HEAGY** (PAGES 12-15)
colors

ZEN
lettering

Journal of the Book
ISSUE 4 OF 6

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Editors: Gabe Carrasco, Frank Mastromauro | Design and Production: Mark Roslan | Lettering fonts designed by: Robin Spehar, Comicraft, Blambot

For Aspen: Founder: Michael Turner | Co-Owner: Peter Steigerwald | Co-Owner/President: Frank Mastromauro
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IN THE EARLIEST DAYS, WHEN THE WORLD WAS STILL RAW, WILD AND UNTAMED, MIYA LIVED WITH HER FATHER NORIS IN THEIR SMALL TRIBAL VILLAGE.

STRUGGLED MORE LIKE IT, JUST TO SURVIVE.

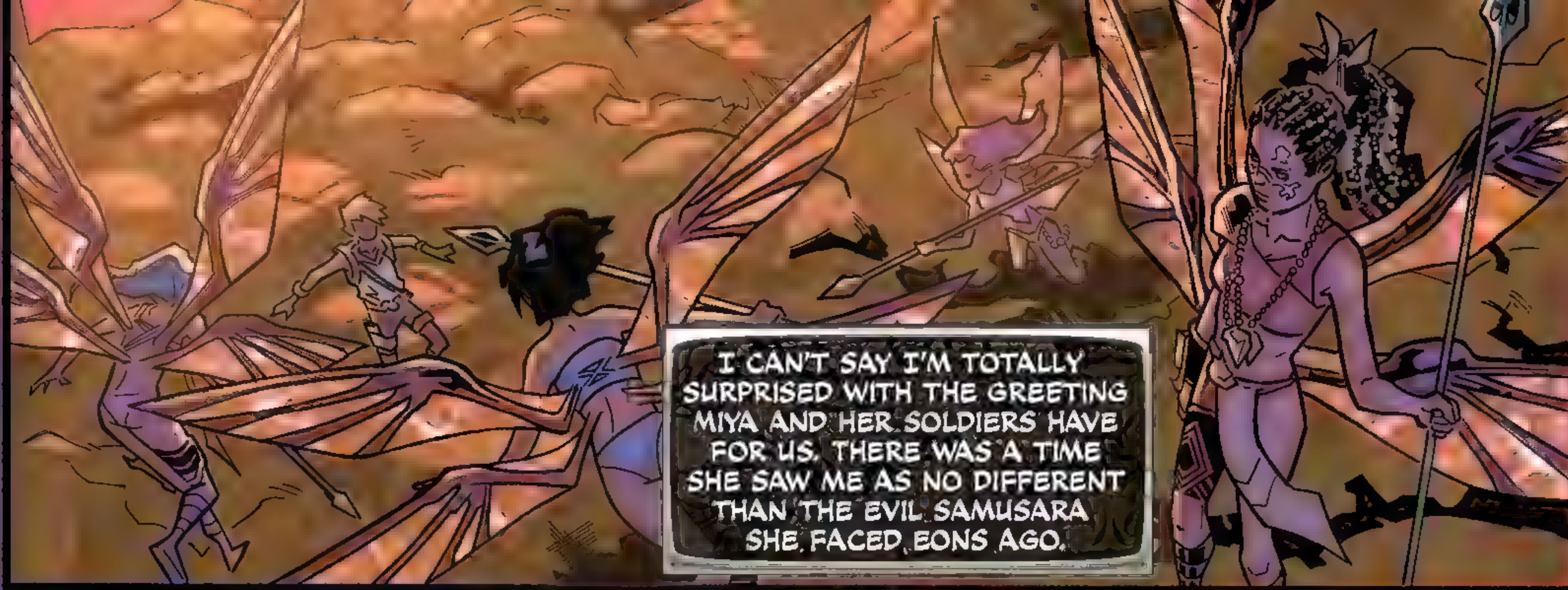
MANY DIDN'T LIKE HER FATHER. SHE LOST HIM AND HER FREEDOM, ENSLAVED BY THE MONSTROUS NIGHTCRAWLERS IN THE SERVICE OF THEIR LORD AND MASTER-- KHA AZ.

ALTHOUGH MIYA DID NOT KNOW IT AT THE TIME, KHA AZ WAS MORE THAN JUST A SORCERER OF GREAT POWER. HE WAS A SAMUSARA OF THE AGE, A UNIQUE SPIRIT CONNECTED TO THE MAGIC OF THE UNIVERSE.

BUT HIS SOUL WAS CORRUPT AND EVIL, AND SO, THE MAGIC SWIRLED WITH THE CHAOS HE CREATED.

SHOWING HER OWN STRENGTH OF SPIRIT, MIYA ROSE UP WITH THE OTHER SLAVES AND UNITED WITH KHA AZ'S MINIONS TO END HIS REIGN OF TERROR, CHANNELING ALL THE POWER AND THE MISERY OF THEIR EXISTENCE INTO A SINGLE, MYSTICAL BLADE WITH WHICH TO STRIKE HIM DOWN.

MIYA HAS SPENT THE AGES FIGHTING THE CHAOS OF MAGIC, STANDING AGAINST THE DARKNESS IT BRINGS, NO MATTER THE FORM IT TAKES.



I CAN'T SAY I'M TOTALLY SURPRISED WITH THE GREETING MIYA AND HER SOLDIERS HAVE FOR US. THERE WAS A TIME SHE SAW ME AS NO DIFFERENT THAN THE EVIL SAMUSARA SHE FACED EONS AGO.



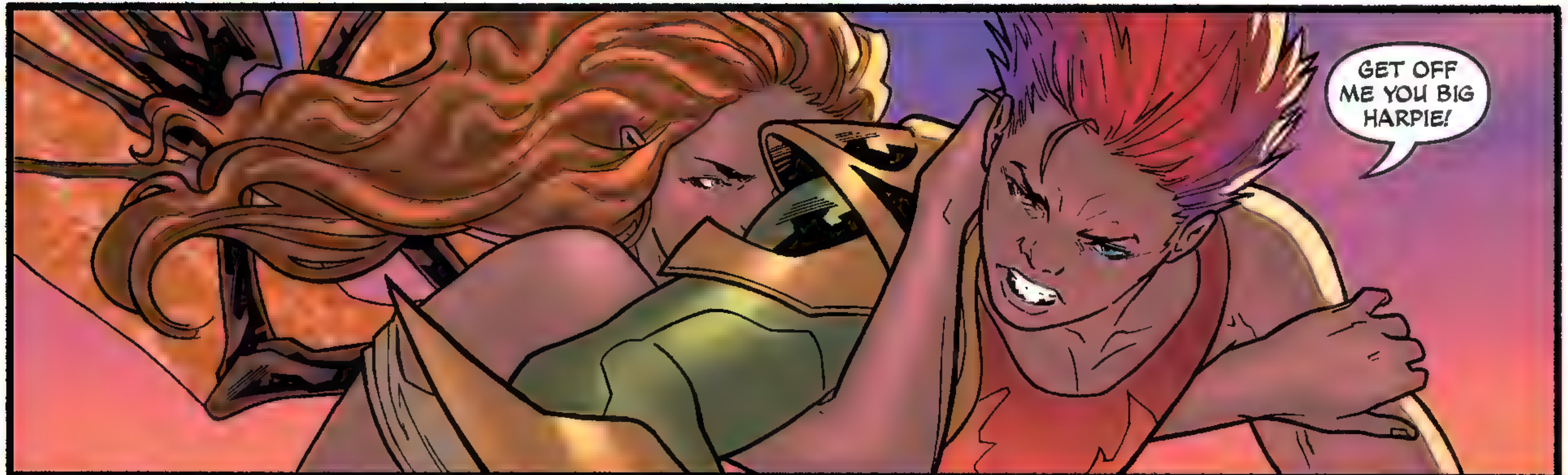
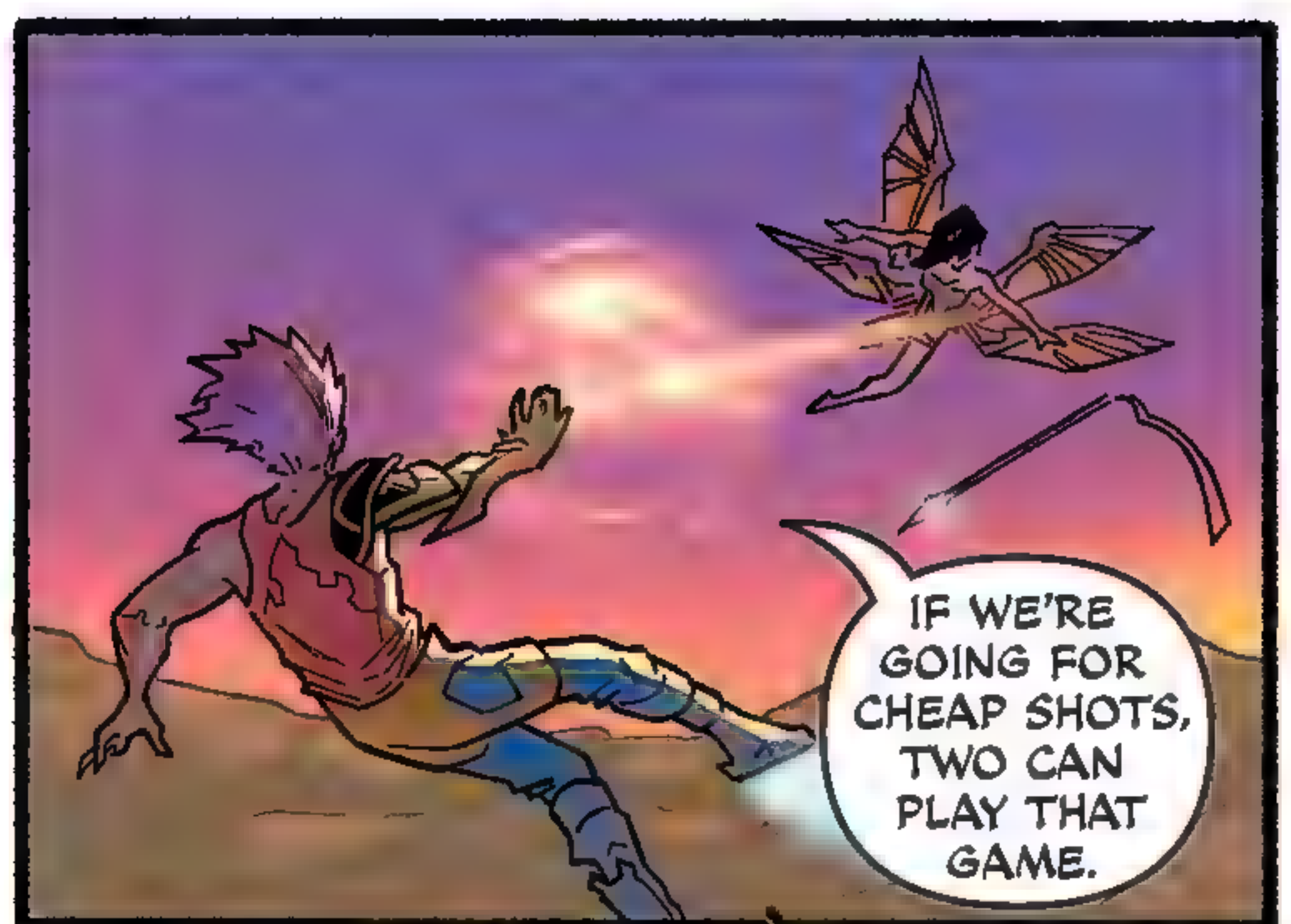
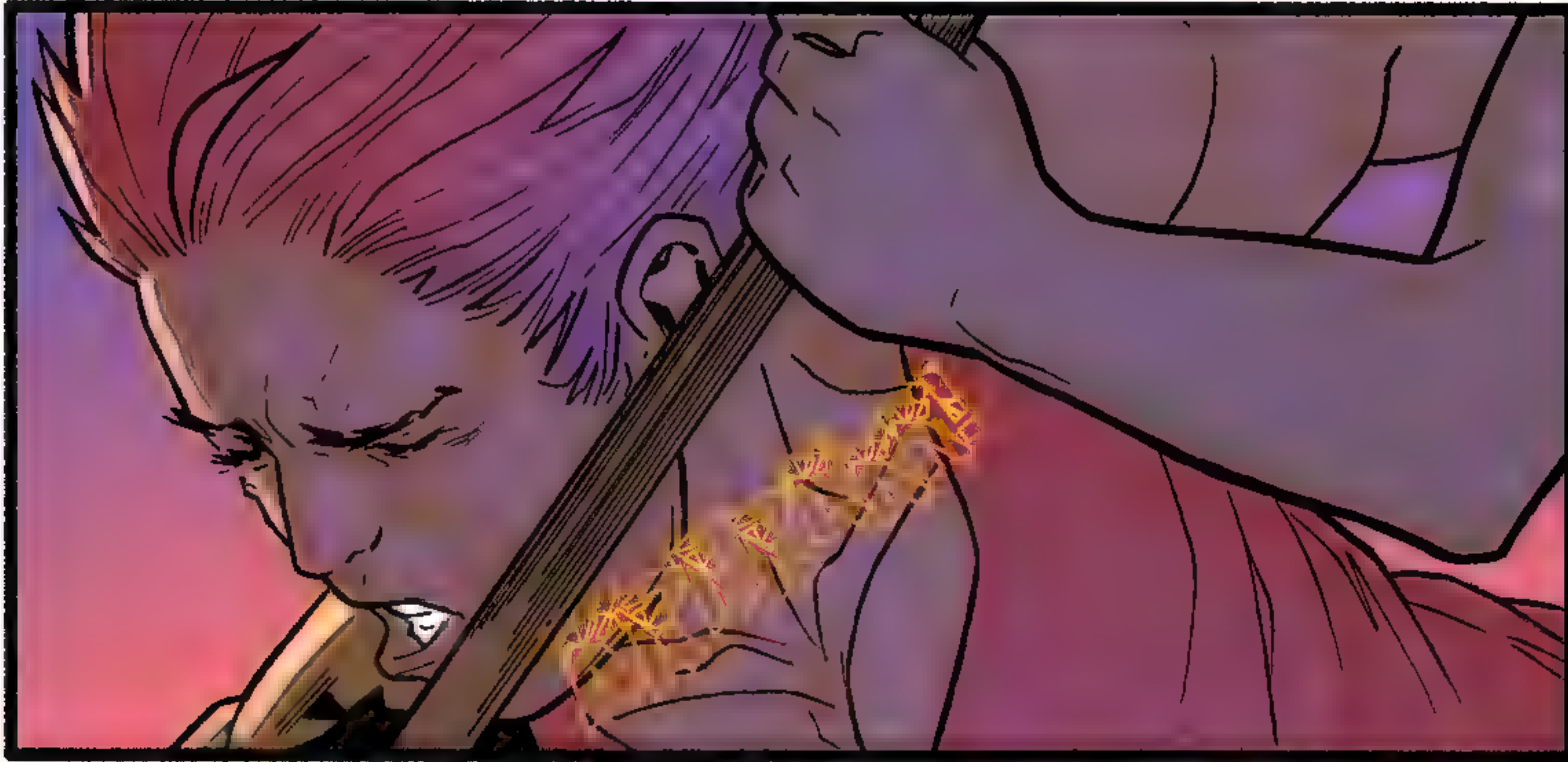
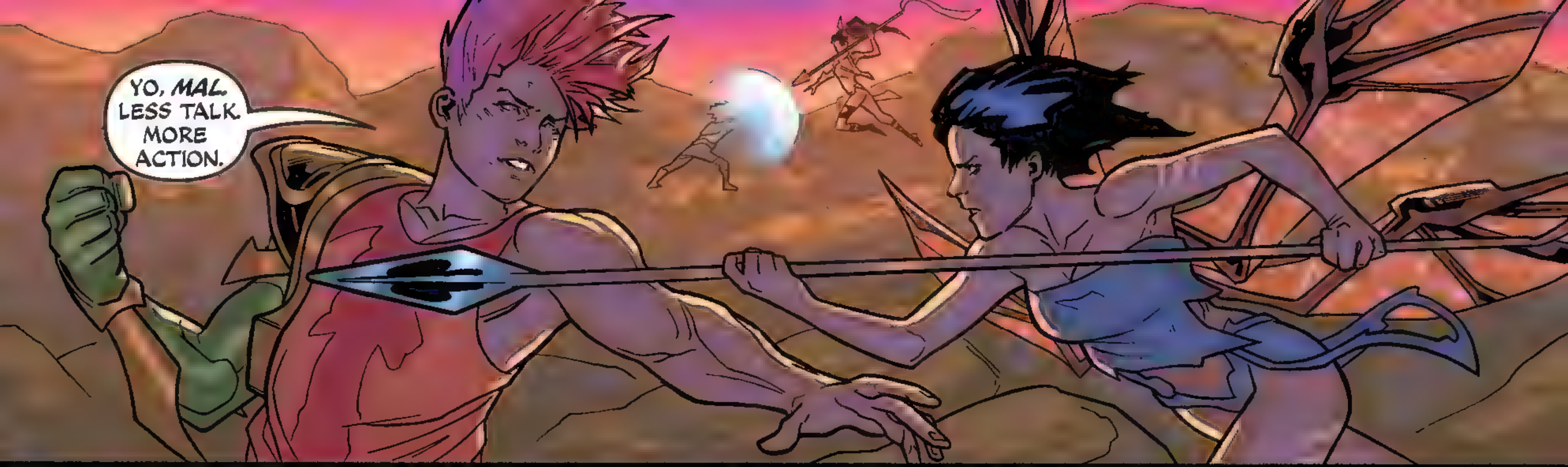
I THOUGHT WE WERE WAY PASSED THAT.

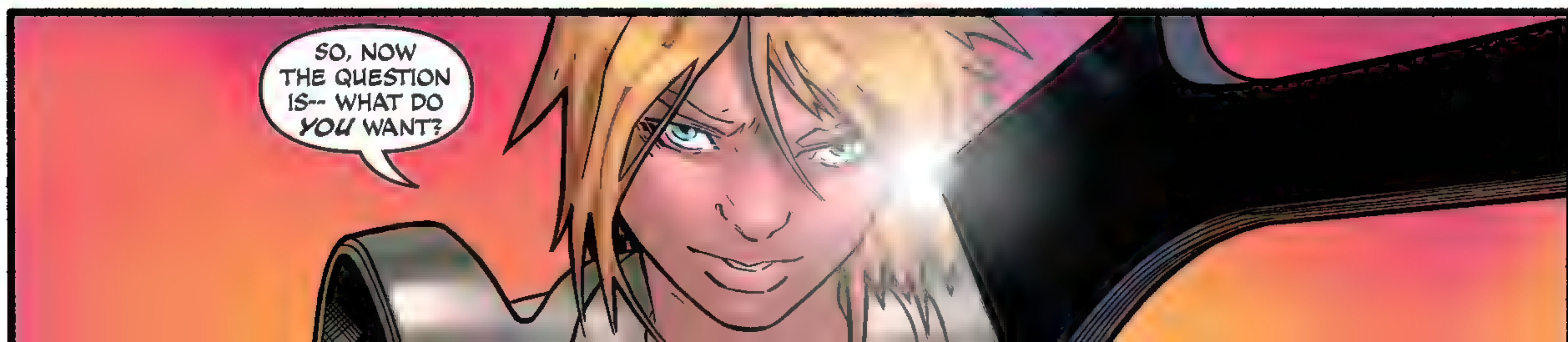
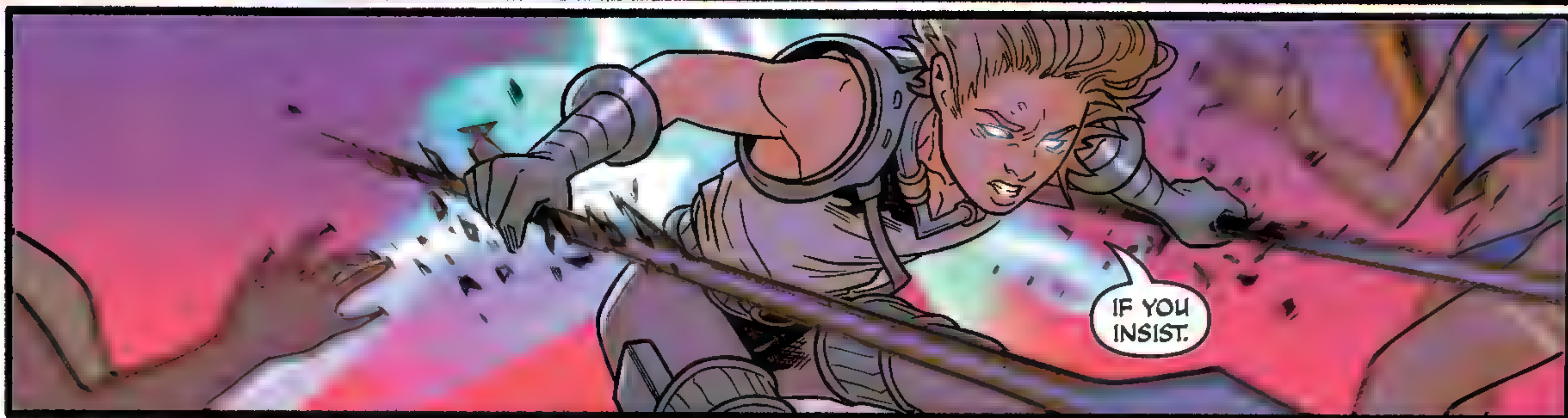


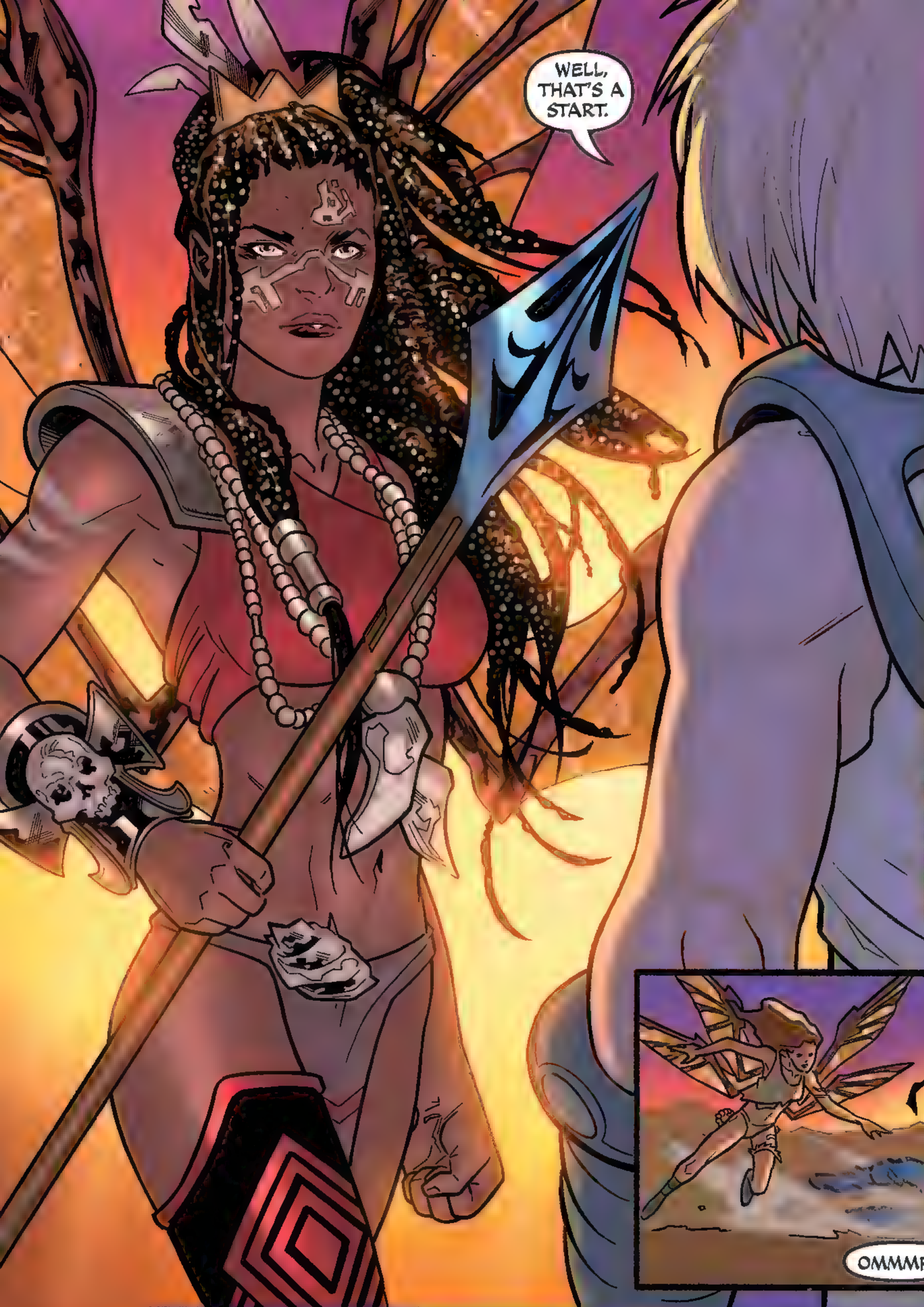
GUESS I WAS WRONG.

MIYA, STOP ATTACKING FOR ONE SECOND AND LISTEN. I'M NOT HERE TO FIGHT YOU.

THEN TURN AROUND AND GO BACK.



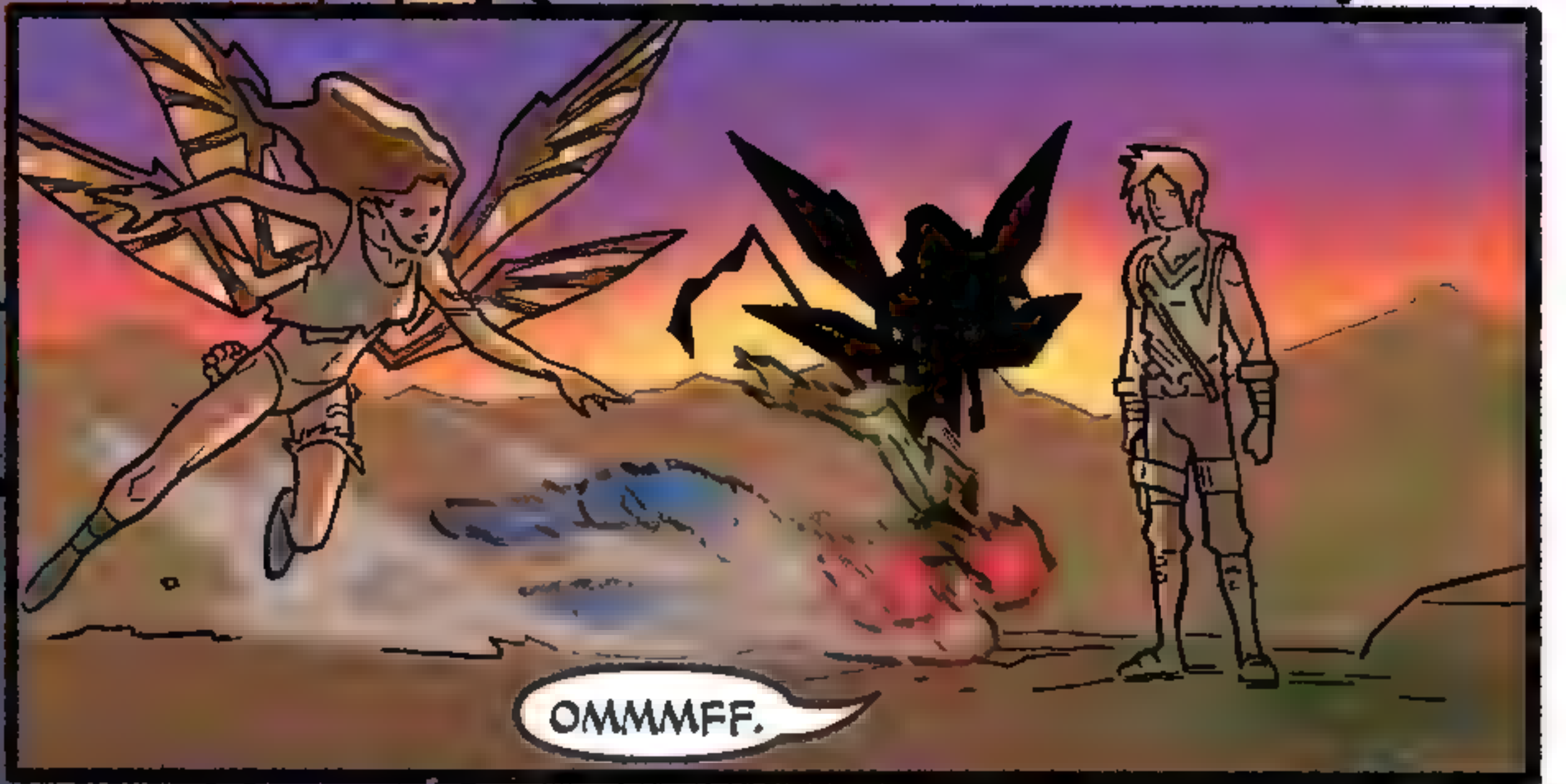




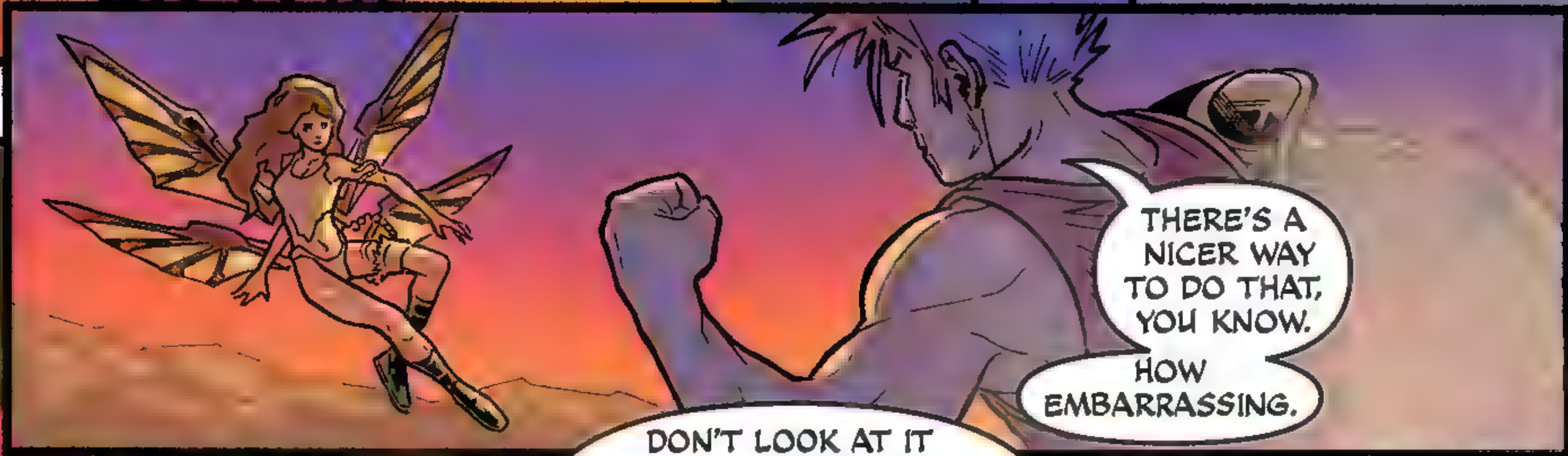
WELL,
THAT'S A
START.



PUT HIM
DOWN.



OMMMFF.

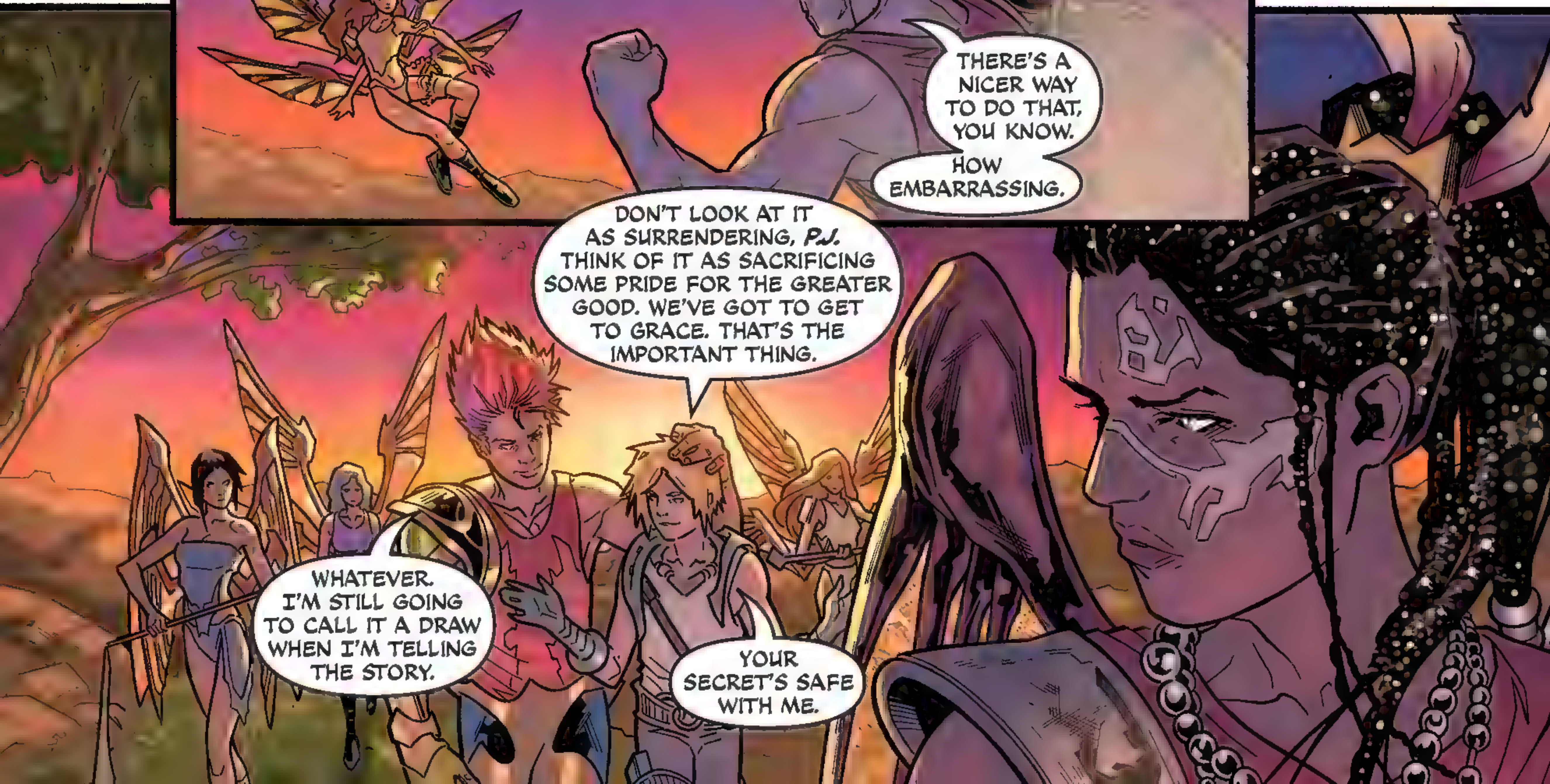


THERE'S A
NICER WAY
TO DO THAT,
YOU KNOW.
HOW
EMBARRASSING.

DON'T LOOK AT IT
AS SURRENDERING, P.J.
THINK OF IT AS SACRIFICING
SOME PRIDE FOR THE GREATER
GOOD. WE'VE GOT TO GET
TO GRACE. THAT'S THE
IMPORTANT THING.

WHATEVER.
I'M STILL GOING
TO CALL IT A DRAW
WHEN I'M TELLING
THE STORY.

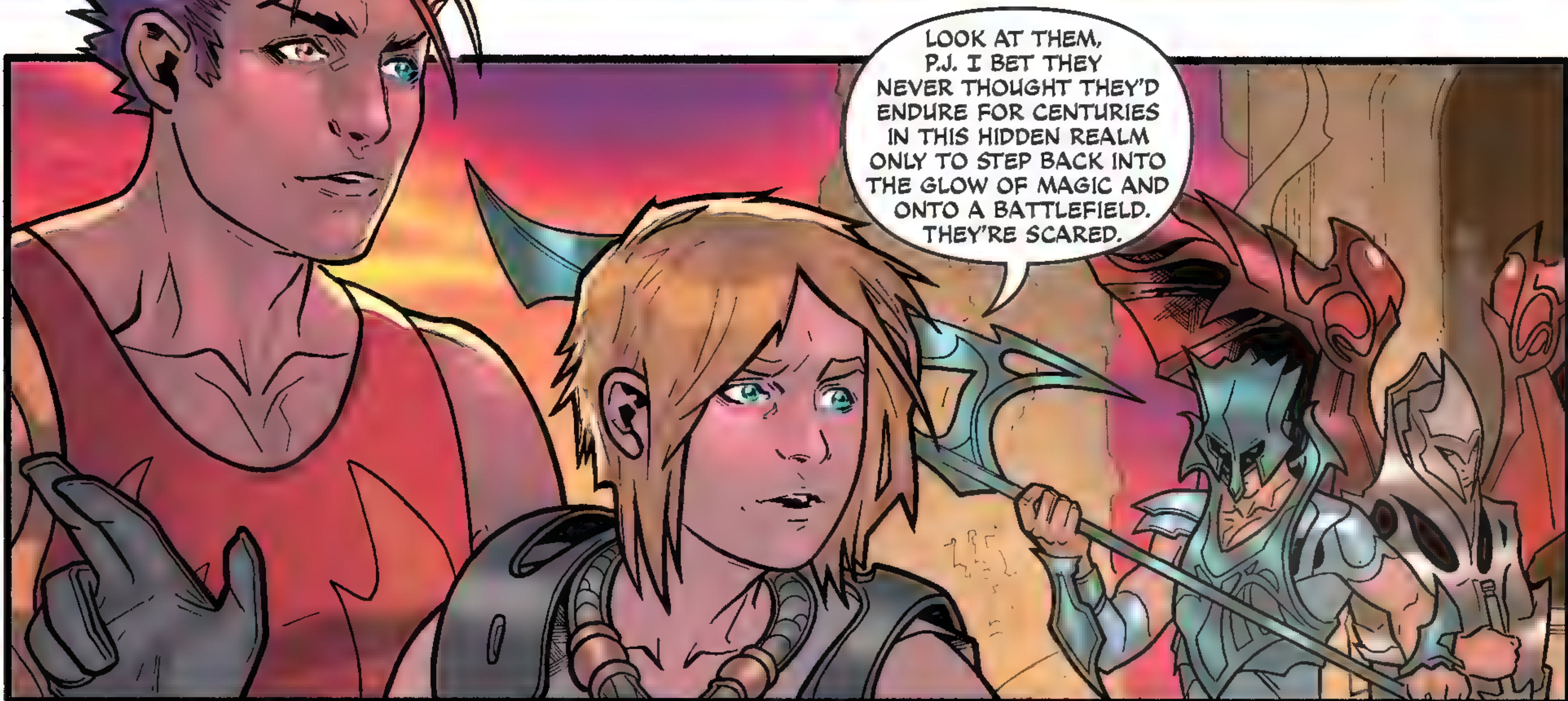
YOUR
SECRET'S SAFE
WITH ME.





THE EVERLANDS. THE KINGDOM OF ANANTIA.

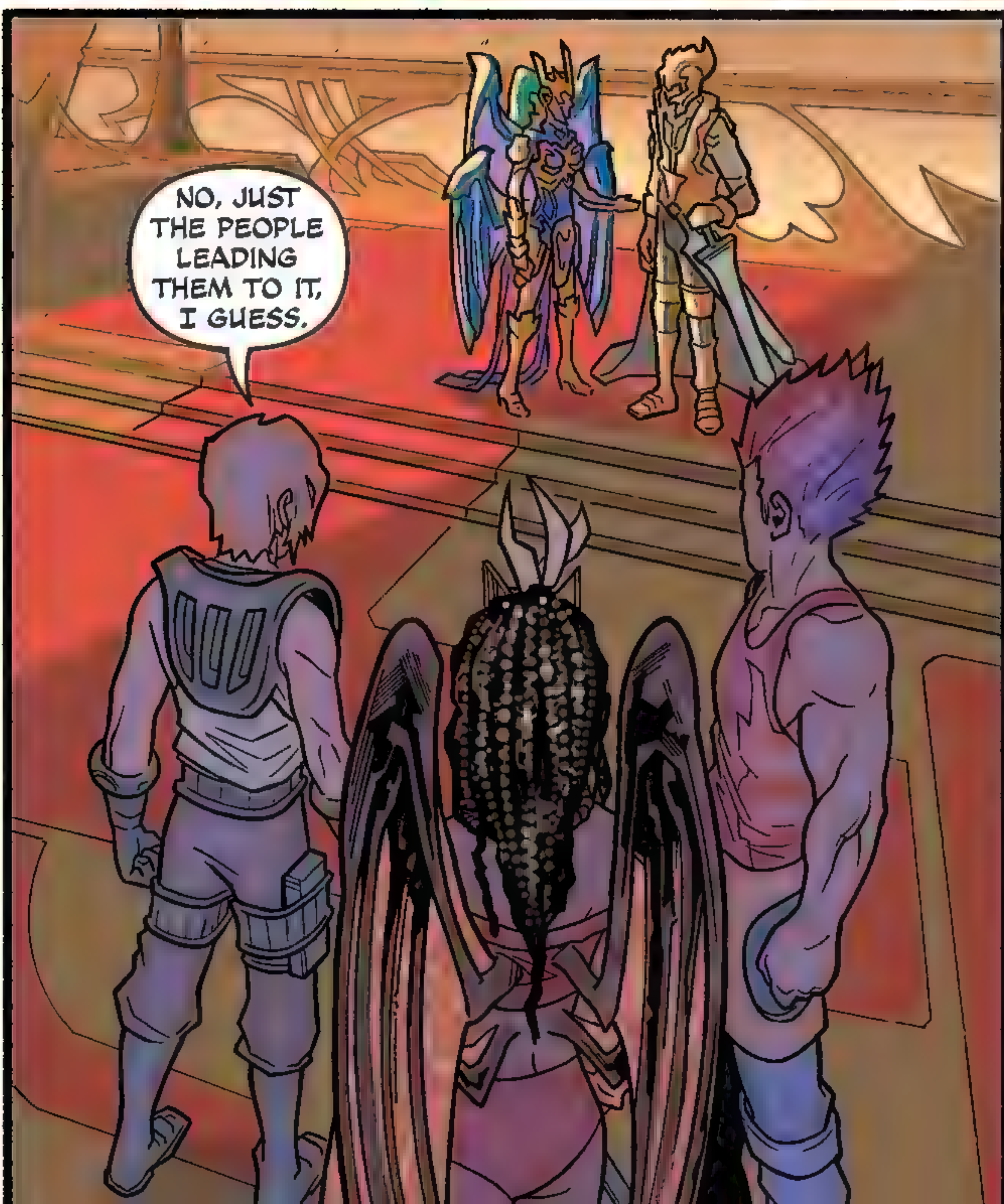
FOR AN ENCHANTED KINGDOM, THE MOOD SURE IS A MAJOR DOWNER, YA THINK?



LOOK AT THEM, P.J. I BET THEY NEVER THOUGHT THEY'D ENDURE FOR CENTURIES IN THIS HIDDEN REALM ONLY TO STEP BACK INTO THE GLOW OF MAGIC AND ONTO A BATTLEFIELD. THEY'RE SCARED.



THOSE HERE DON'T FEAR DEATH, MALIKAL.



NO, JUST THE PEOPLE LEADING THEM TO IT, I GUESS.



I'VE NEVER SEEN GRACE LIKE THIS BEFORE. SHE OFTEN HAS A DISTANT AURA ABOUT HER. THAT'S NOTHING NEW. THIS TIME, SHE'S DIFFERENT. COLD. RUTHLESS.

EVEN WHEN HER SOUL WAS ONCE TAKEN OVER BY THE CHAOS OF MAGIC, IT WAS EASIER TO ACCEPT BECAUSE IT WASN'T HER. NOT REALLY. THE EVIL DIDN'T COME FROM WITHIN.*

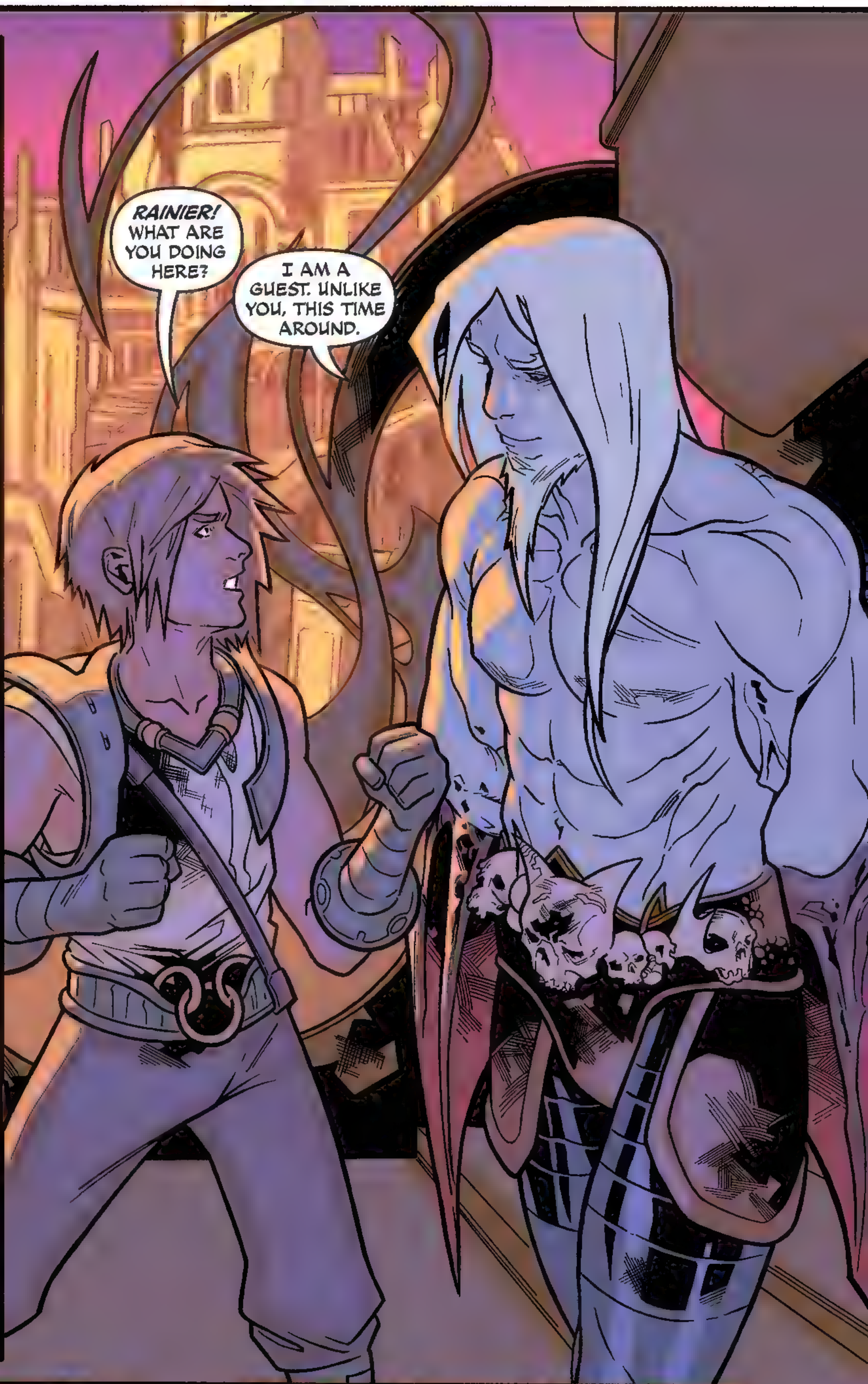
BUT, SHE'S NOT POSSESSED, NOW.

SO, WHY DO I FEEL LIKE SHE'S EVEN FURTHER BEYOND MY REACH?

*EDITOR'S NOTE: SEE SOULFIRE VOLUME 4 FOR DETAILS!

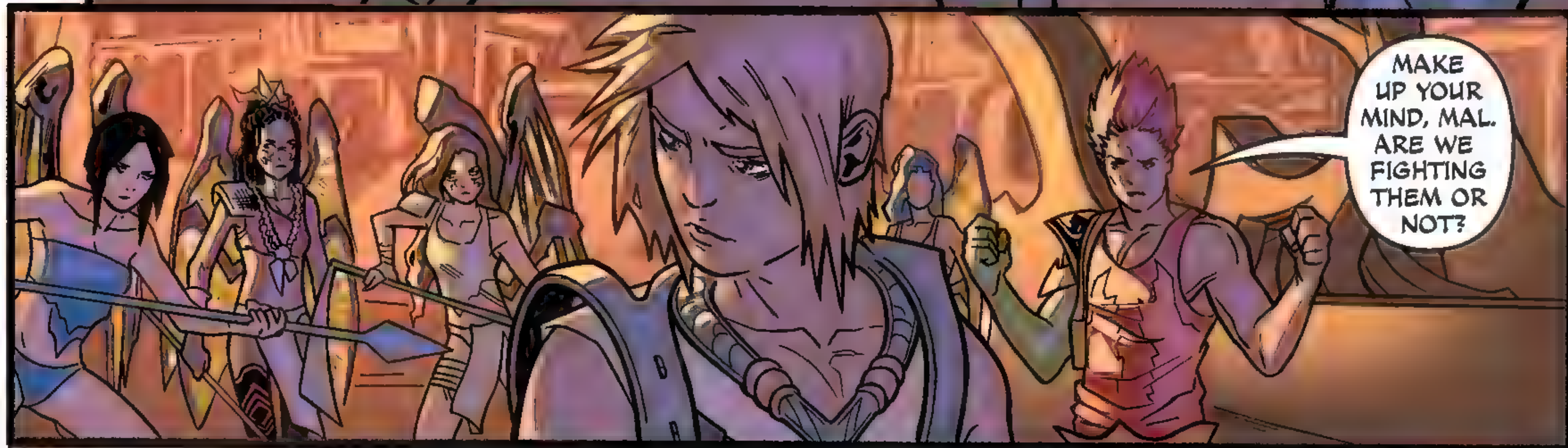


SUCH A
SMALL
WORLD.

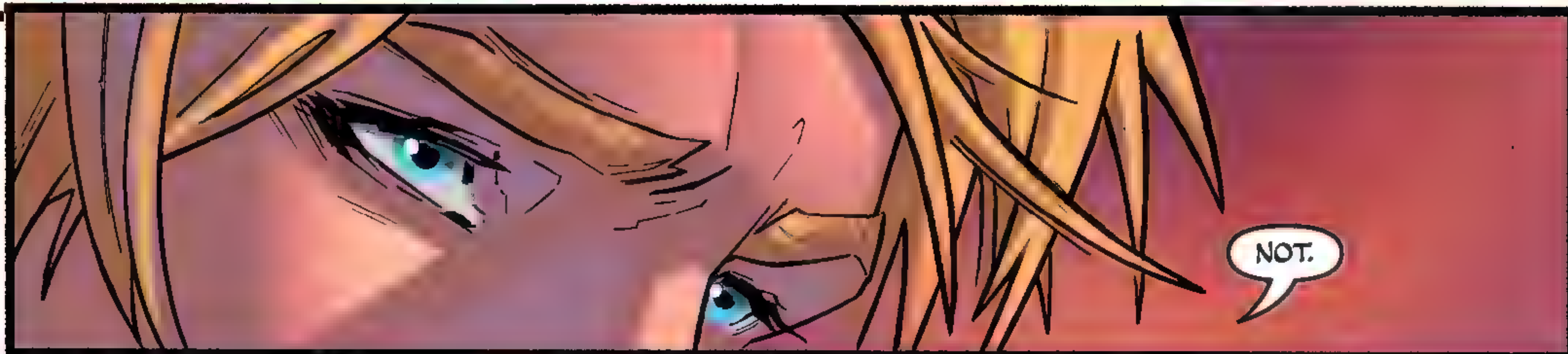


RAINIER!
WHAT ARE
YOU DOING
HERE?

I AM A
GUEST. UNLIKE
YOU, THIS TIME
AROUND.



MAKE
UP YOUR
MIND, MAL.
ARE WE
FIGHTING
THEM OR
NOT?



NOT.



HOW IRONIC. THAT AFTER EVERYTHING I HAVE BEEN THROUGH-- AFTER SO MUCH CHANGE-- I HAVE COME TO SEE THE LIGHT. AND NOW, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAS LOST YOUR WAY.



I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU SAY. YOU'RE STILL A MONSTER, RAINIER.



I SEE. SO BLINDED THAT YOU CANNOT SEE THROUGH YOUR OWN HATRED. OR OUR FORM.

IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE. IT'S WHAT YOU'VE DONE. WHAT YOU ARE. THERE'S NO REDEMPTION FOR YOU, RAINIER. NOT YOU. NOT EVER.



IT SEEMS NOT EVERYONE AGREES WITH YOU... BOY.



GRACE, WE NEED TO TALK.



LAST TIME
RAINIER WAS HERE,
HE WAS TRYING TO DESTROY
THE ENTIRE REALM. RIGHT AFTER
HE KILLED THE TWO OF US. FOR
SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN AROUND
FOR CENTURIES, YOU'VE
SURE GOT A SHORT
MEMORY.

YOU SEE
THE ONE
NEXT HIM?

THE
WOMAN.
REMEMBER
VANYSS?

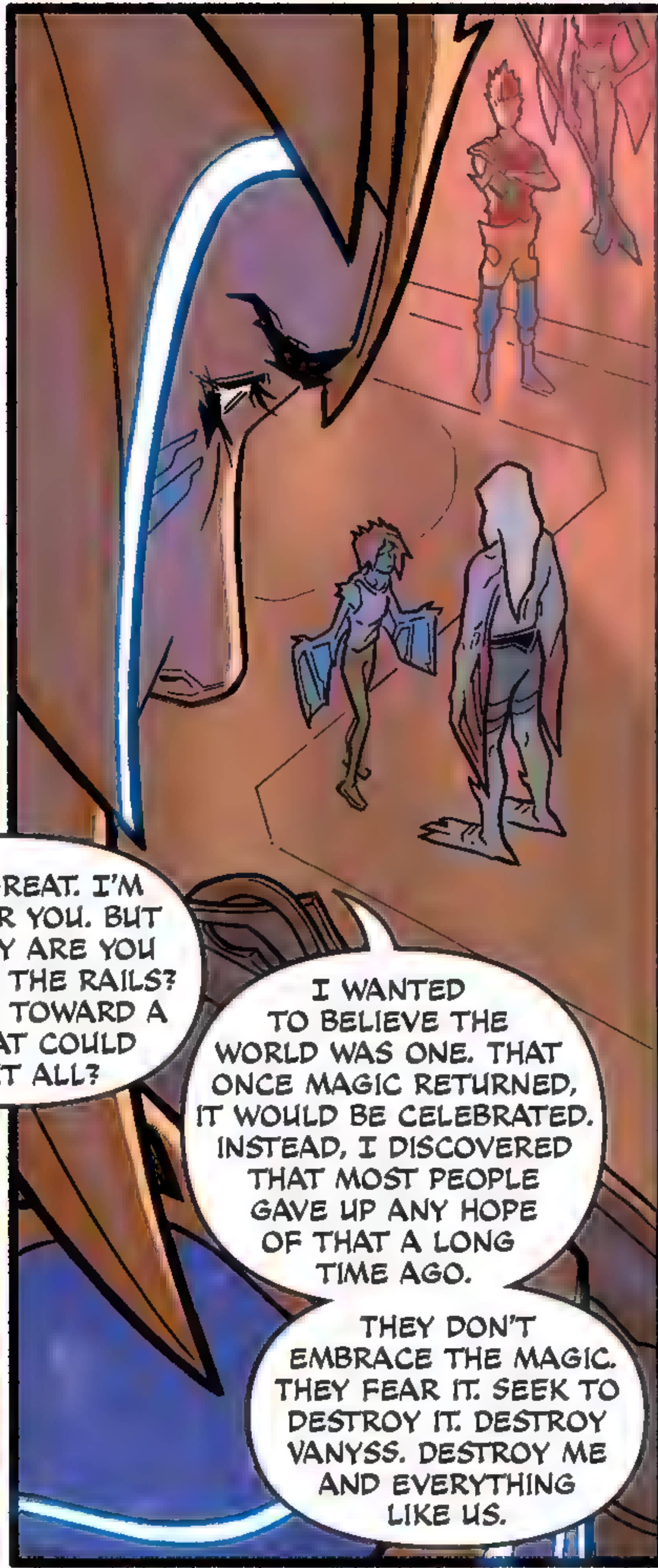
THE ONE
FROM PARIS,
RIGHT?



FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN AGES, I HAD
ALLOWED MYSELF TO OPEN
MY HEART TO SOMETHING
NEW. TO SOMEONE NEW.
THANKS IN PART TO
YOU, MALIKAL.

YOU DIDN'T
JUST BRING MAGIC
BACK TO THE WORLD.
YOU BROUGHT LIFE
ITSELF.

THAT'S GREAT. I'M
HAPPY FOR YOU. BUT
THEN, WHY ARE YOU
GOING OFF THE RAILS?
MARCHING TOWARD A
WAR THAT COULD
END IT ALL?



I WANTED
TO BELIEVE THE
WORLD WAS ONE. THAT
ONCE MAGIC RETURNED,
IT WOULD BE CELEBRATED.
INSTEAD, I DISCOVERED
THAT MOST PEOPLE
GAVE UP ANY HOPE
OF THAT A LONG
TIME AGO.

THEY DON'T
EMBRACE THE MAGIC.
THEY FEAR IT. SEEK TO
DESTROY IT. DESTROY
VANYSS. DESTROY ME
AND EVERYTHING
LIKE US.



THEY'RE
SCARED.
THEY DON'T
UNDERSTAND
IT, YET.

NO, THEY
DON'T WANT IT. AND,
I'M NOT GOING TO HIDE
ANYMORE. FOR ANYBODY.
YOU THINK I'M TO BLAME
FOR WHATEVER CONFLICT
COMES? I'M NOT.
THEY ARE.



I SAID I
WAS STARTING THIS
WAR, BUT THE TRUTH IS
THAT THIS STRUGGLE FOR
SURVIVAL HAS BEEN
GOING ON SINCE
THE BEGINNING.

AND, WE'RE
GOING TO KEEP ON
FIGHTING. KEEP ON
SURVIVING.

LATER

THE THRONE ROOM HAS QUITE THE VIEW, DOES IT NOT?

FAYE— UH, YOUR MAJESTY, I WASN'T TRYING TO INTRUDE. I THOUGHT NOBODY WOULD BE HERE SO LATE.

DO NOT BE CONCERNED. YOU ARE NOT TRESPASSING. THE GREAT HALL BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF **ANANTIA**. I MERELY OCCUPY ONE OF THE CHAIRS AT THE FAR END.

IT CALLS TO ME AT NIGHT. FILLS MY MIND WITH ITS BURDENS AND DEMANDS.

A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY, I'M SURE.

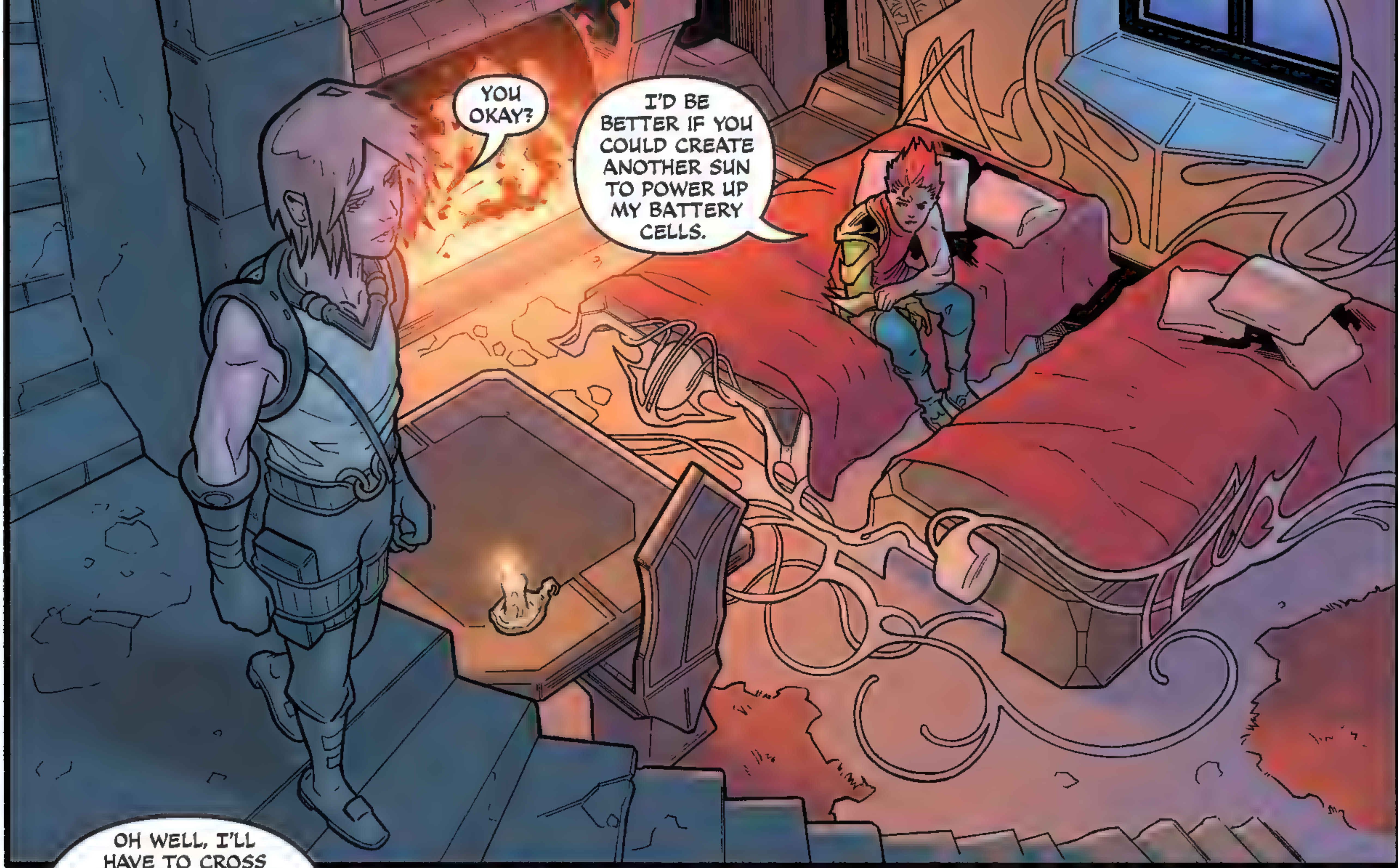
BUT, YOU'RE HER QUEEN. GRACE HAS TO LISTEN TO YOU, DOESN'T SHE?

GRACE'S DUTY IS BEYOND ANY KINGDOM. SHE FEELS A CALLING TO THE MAGIC. ONE I FEAR MAY CONSUME HER.

AND POSSIBLY, THE REST OF US.

WE BOTH KNOW ABOUT THAT, DON'T WE?

I'M GLAD YOU ARE HERE, MALIKAI. I FEEL LIKE I FINALLY HAVE AN ALLY IN THIS DELICATE CLIMATE AS WAR LOOMS ON THE HORIZON.



YOU
OKAY?

I'D BE
BETTER IF YOU
COULD CREATE
ANOTHER SUN
TO POWER UP
MY BATTERY
CELLS.

OH WELL, I'LL
HAVE TO CROSS
MY FINGERS THAT
WHEN TROUBLE STARTS
IT'S DURING THE DAYLIGHT.
OTHERWISE, I'M NOT
GOING TO BE MUCH HELP.
THOUGH, I'M NOT EVEN
SURE I WANT
TO ANYWAY.

WHAT'S
THAT SUPPOSED
TO MEAN?



LOOK, I
GET IT. YOU GOT
YOUR PART TO PLAY
IN ALL THIS. BUT, HOW
MUCH OF YOURSELF
AND YOUR LIFE DO YOU
HAVE TO GIVE OVER TO
IT? I MEAN, WHAT
ARE WE DOING
HERE?

TRYING
TO KEEP GRACE
FROM STARTING AN
ALL-OUT WAR. IT'S
ABOUT SAVING
LIVES, P.J.

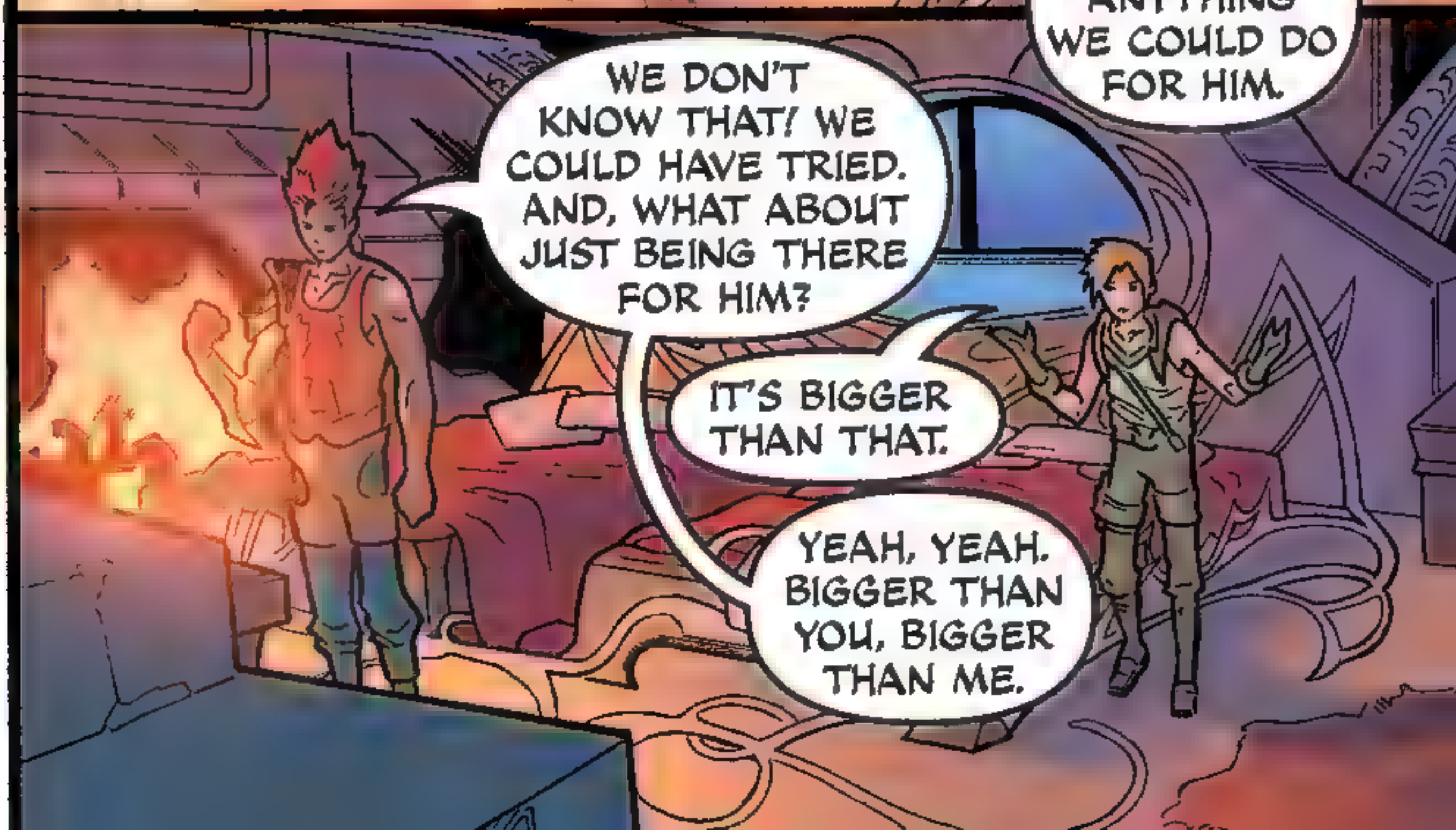


WHAT ABOUT
BENOIST? WHAT
IS HE? JUST
COLLATERAL
DAMAGE?

HOW
CAN
YOU SAY
THAT?

BECAUSE
WE'RE HERE.
NOT WITH HIM.
WE LEFT HIM
BEHIND WITH
ABEL OF ALL
PEOPLE.

THERE
WASN'T
ANYTHING
WE COULD DO
FOR HIM.



WE DON'T
KNOW THAT! WE
COULD HAVE TRIED.
AND, WHAT ABOUT
JUST BEING THERE
FOR HIM?

IT'S BIGGER
THAN THAT.

YEAH, YEAH.
BIGGER THAN
YOU, BIGGER
THAN ME.



BIGGER
THAN...
SONIA?

HEY, SHE'S
THE ONE WHO
LEFT ME! I
DIDN'T LEAVE
HER.



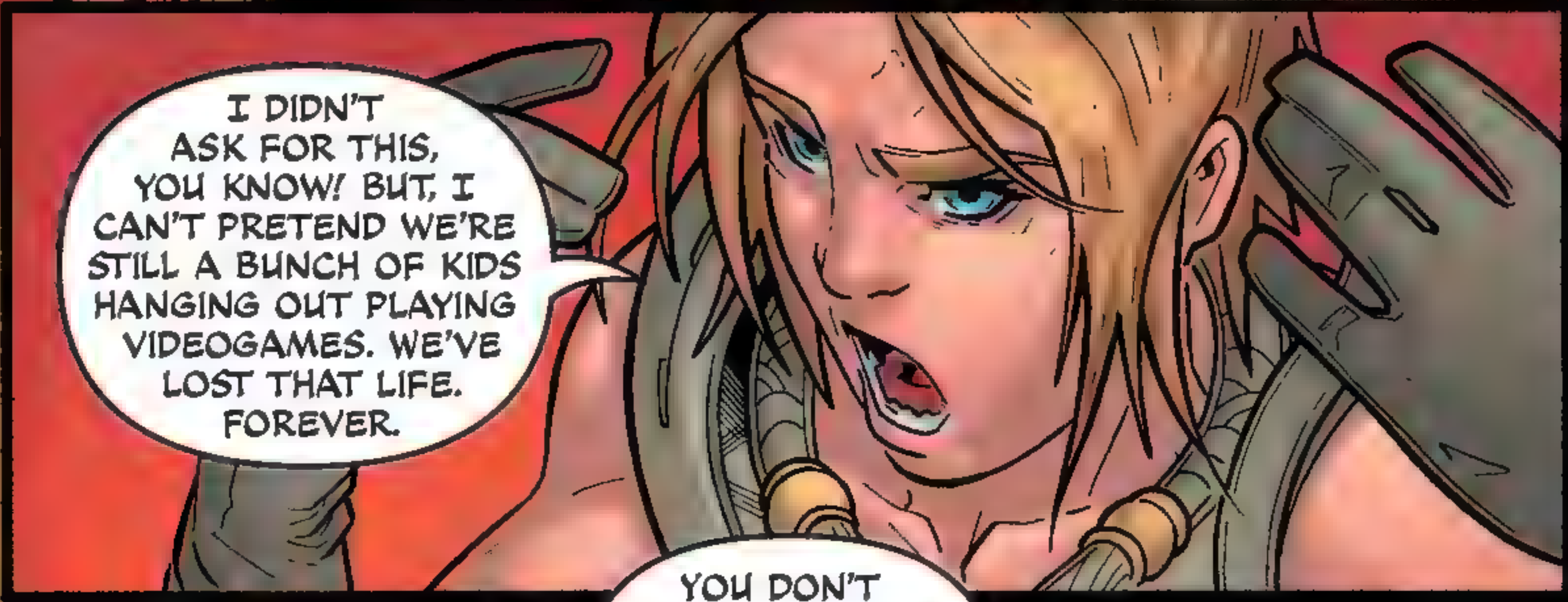
BUT, YOU
DIDN'T GO
AFTER HER?

SHE
TOLD ME
NOT TO.

EVER THINK
SHE WANTED
TO SEE WHAT YOU
WOULD CHOOSE?
WHICH LIFE YOU
REALLY WANT?



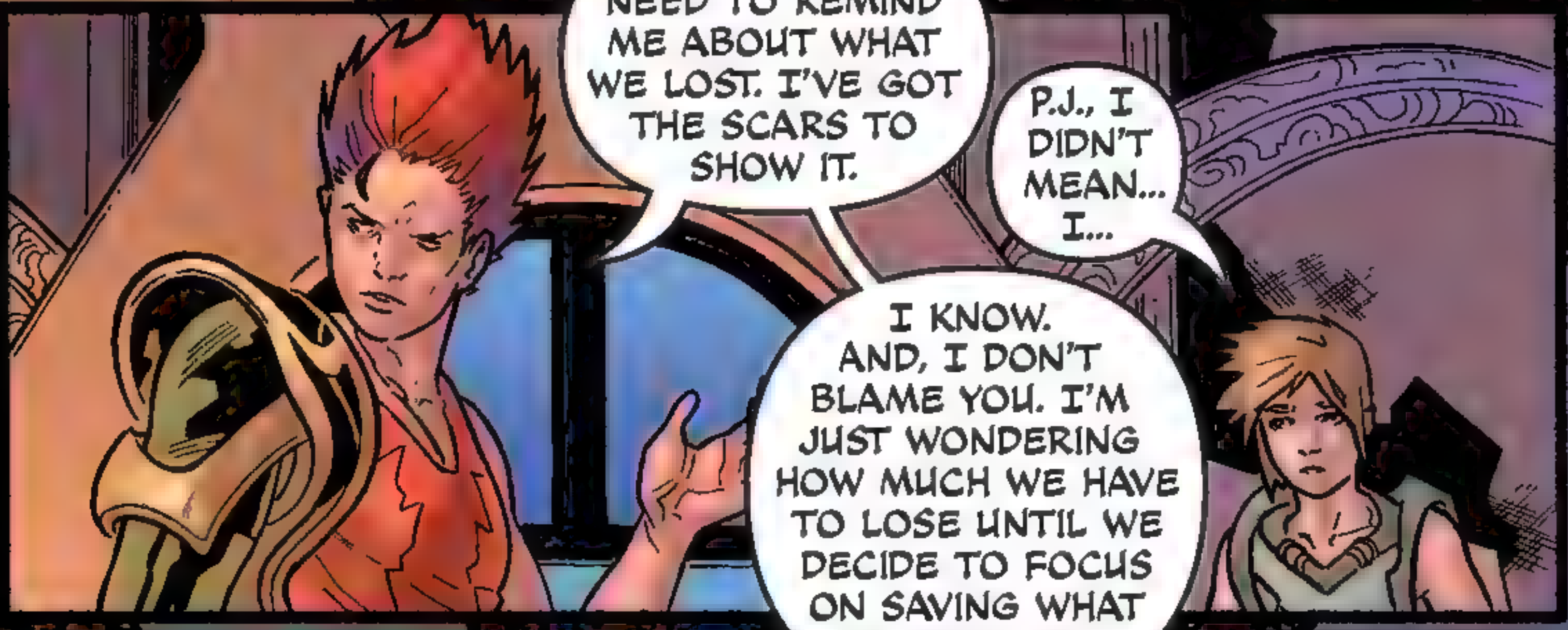
I DIDN'T
ASK FOR THIS,
YOU KNOW! BUT, I
CAN'T PRETEND WE'RE
STILL A BUNCH OF KIDS
HANGING OUT PLAYING
VIDEOGAMES. WE'VE
LOST THAT LIFE.
FOREVER.



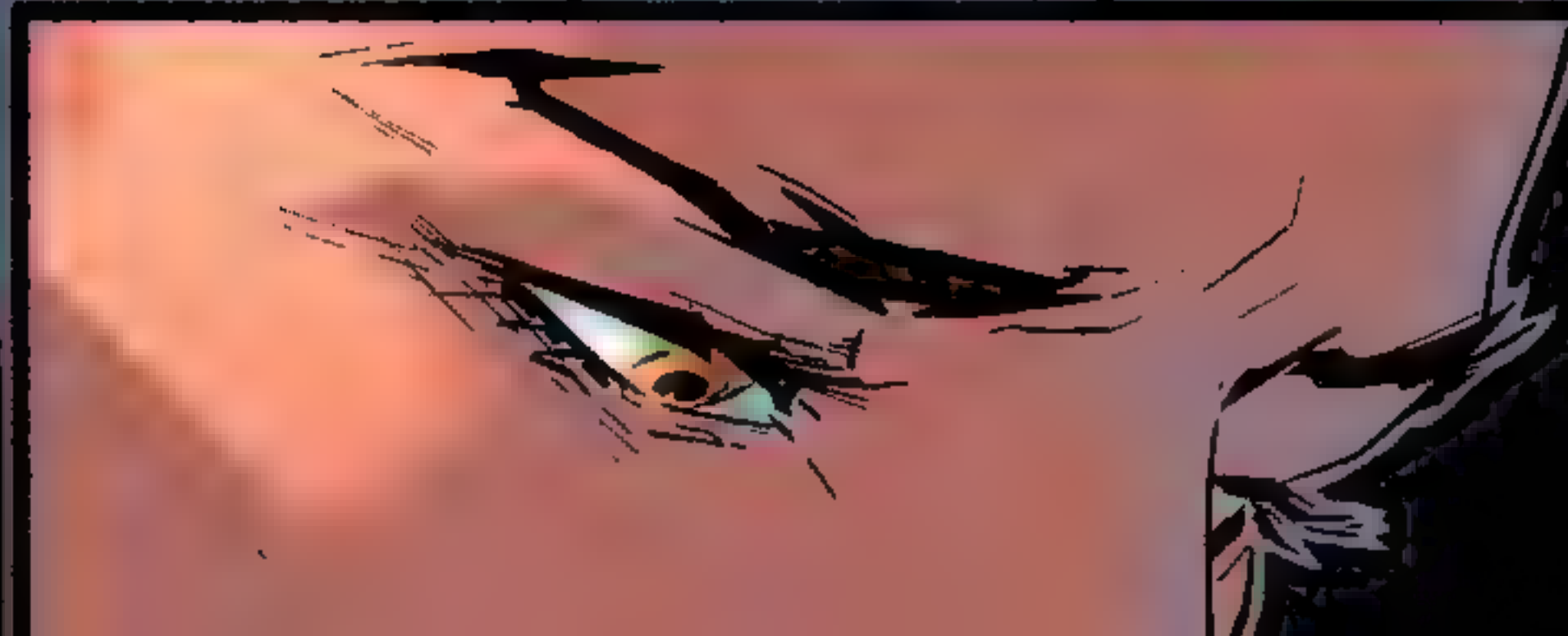
YOU DON'T
NEED TO REMIND
ME ABOUT WHAT
WE LOST. I'VE GOT
THE SCARS TO
SHOW IT.

P.J., I
DIDN'T
MEAN...
I...

I KNOW.
AND, I DON'T
BLAME YOU. I'M
JUST WONDERING
HOW MUCH WE HAVE
TO LOSE UNTIL WE
DECIDE TO FOCUS
ON SAVING WHAT
WE HAVE LEFT.



OTHERWISE,
WHAT WILL
ANY OF THIS
MATTER?



TAP TAP TAP

YES?

I DON'T MEAN TO INTRUDE, BUT I SAW THE LIGHT OF THE FIRE UNDER THE DOOR SO I ASSUMED YOU WERE STILL UP.

YOU CAUGHT ME.

I HAVE NOT SEEN YOU THESE PAST FEW DAYS, AND NISABA HAS BEEN HER USUAL QUIET SELF.

DON'T TELL ME YOU MISSED MY COMPANY? OR MY INPUT IN MATTERS REGARDING THE KINGDOM?

SARIN, DON'T BE SO CHILDISH. THE KINGDOM IS UNEASY WITH SO MUCH TURMOIL IN THE AIR. THE PEOPLE LOOK TO US FOR GUIDANCE AND ASSURANCE.

THAT'S FUNNY. I LOOK TO THEM TO SIMPLY OBEY.

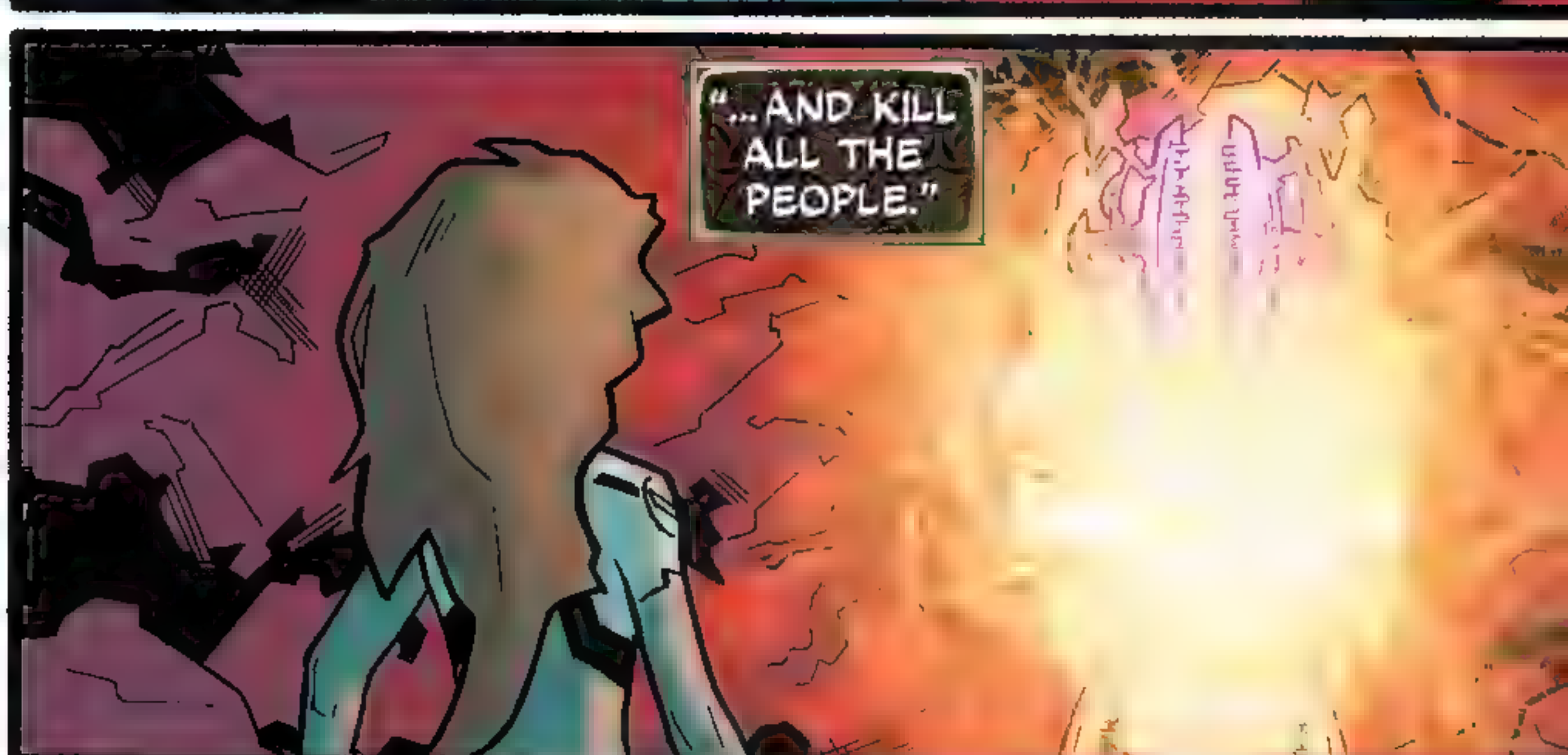
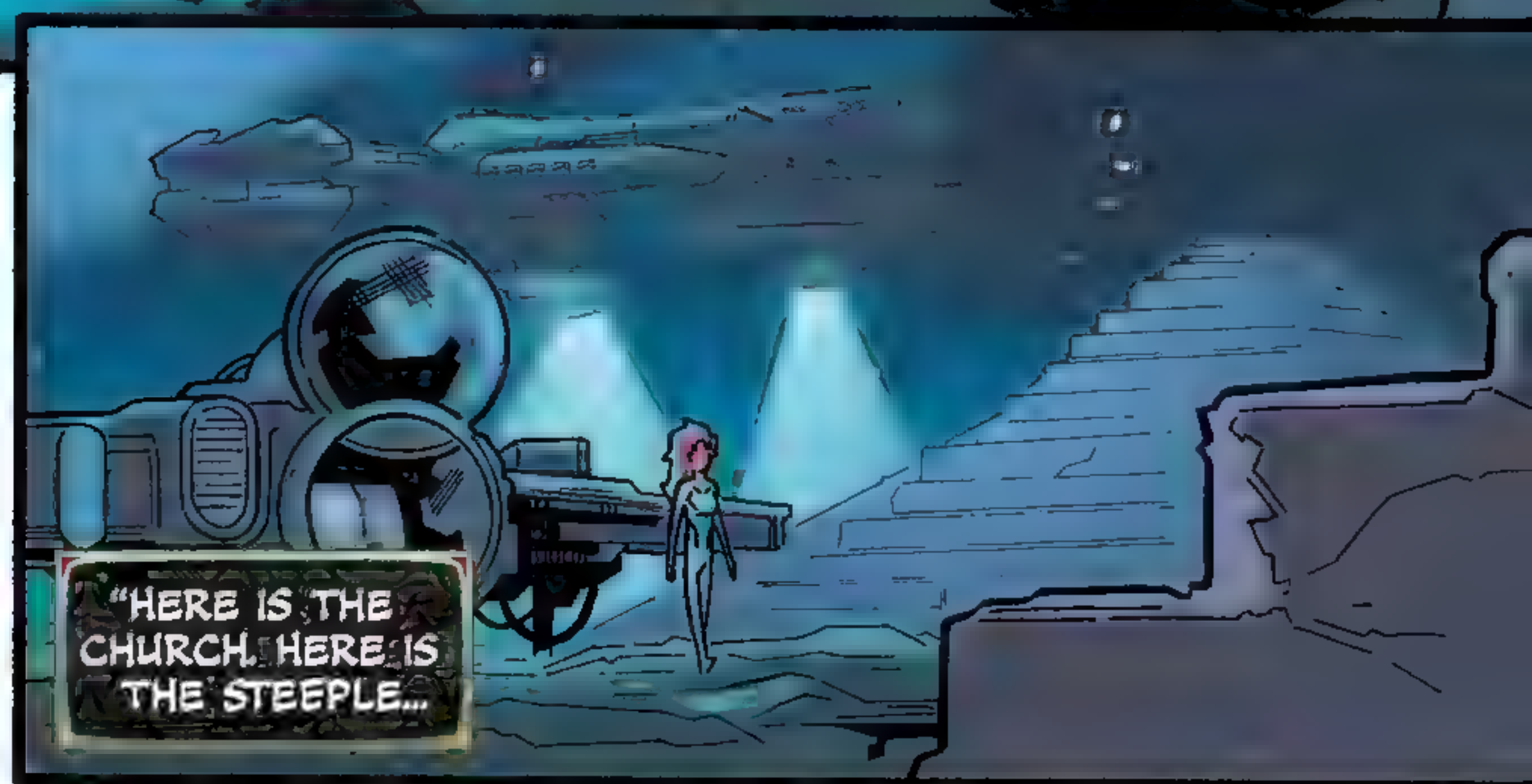
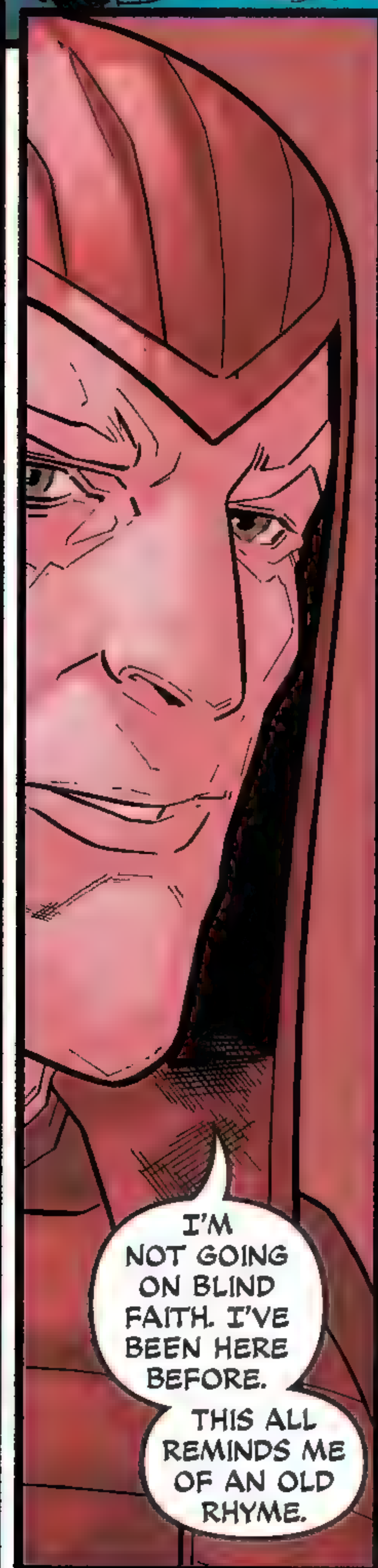
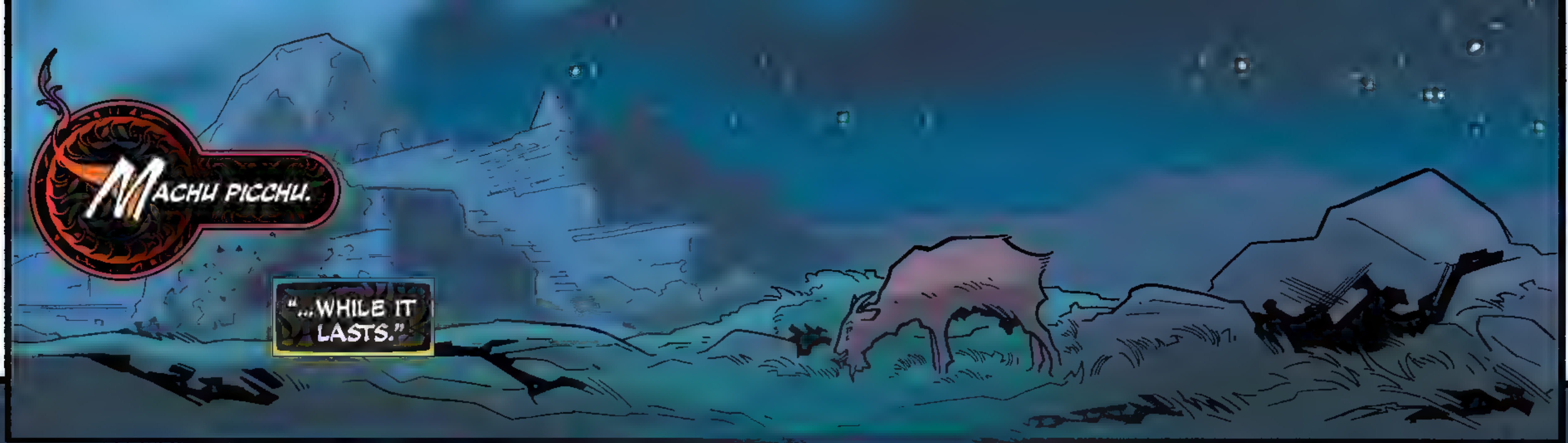
I USED TO EXPECT THE SAME FROM MY QUEEN.

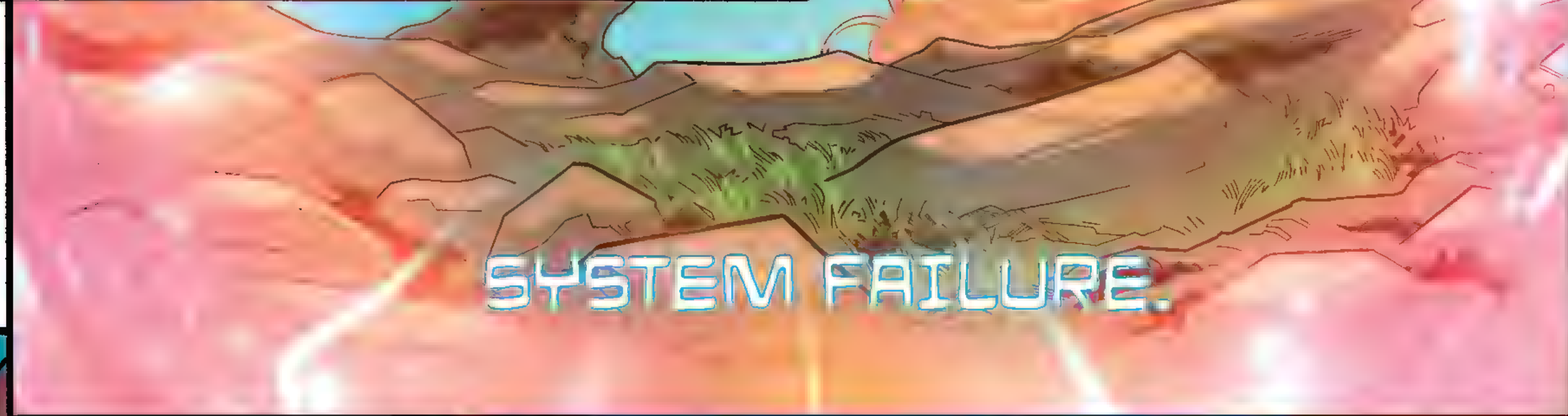
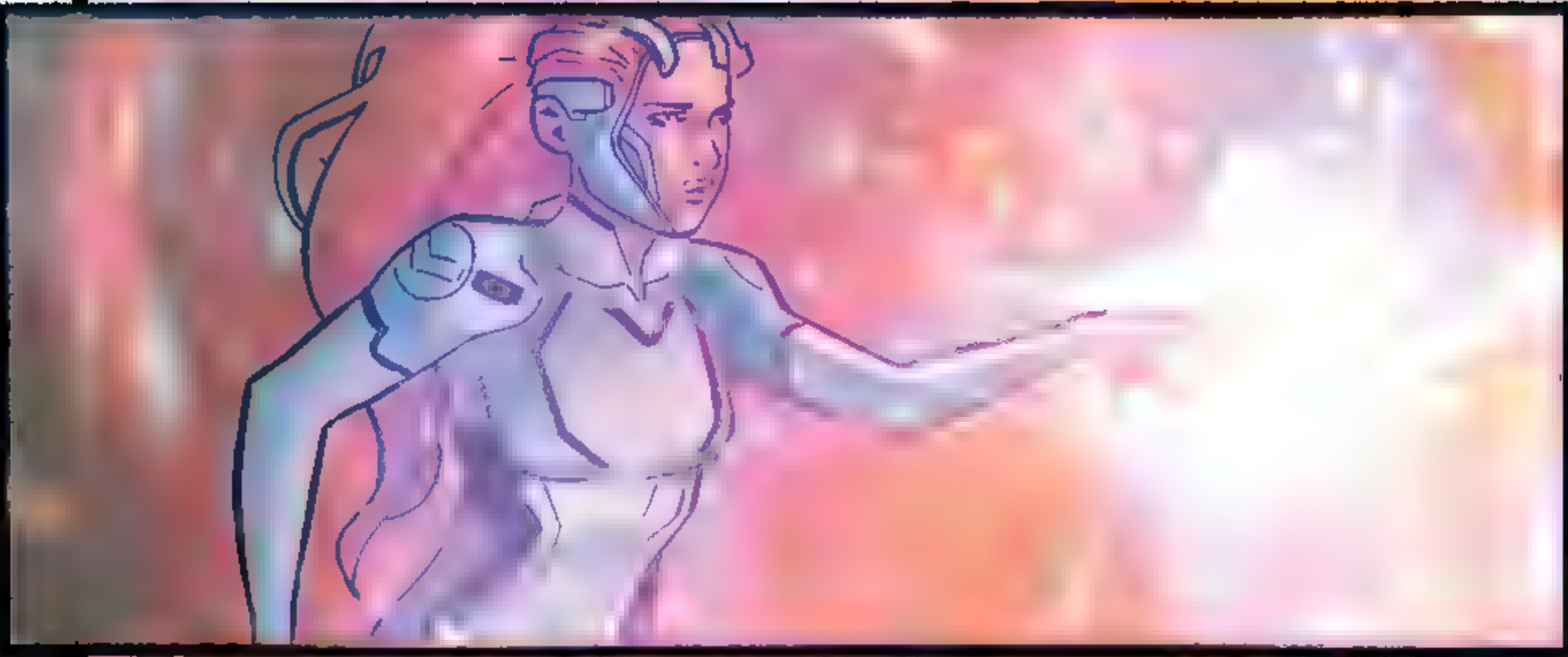
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU. I GAVE UP HOPE ON US SEEING EYE TO EYE A LONG TIME AGO. BUT, WE MUST UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER. WE MUST COMMUNICATE. FOR THE GOOD OF THE KINGDOM.

I DO NOT LIKE THE IDEA OF YOU SULKING ABOUT IN THE DARKNESS. PLOTTING.

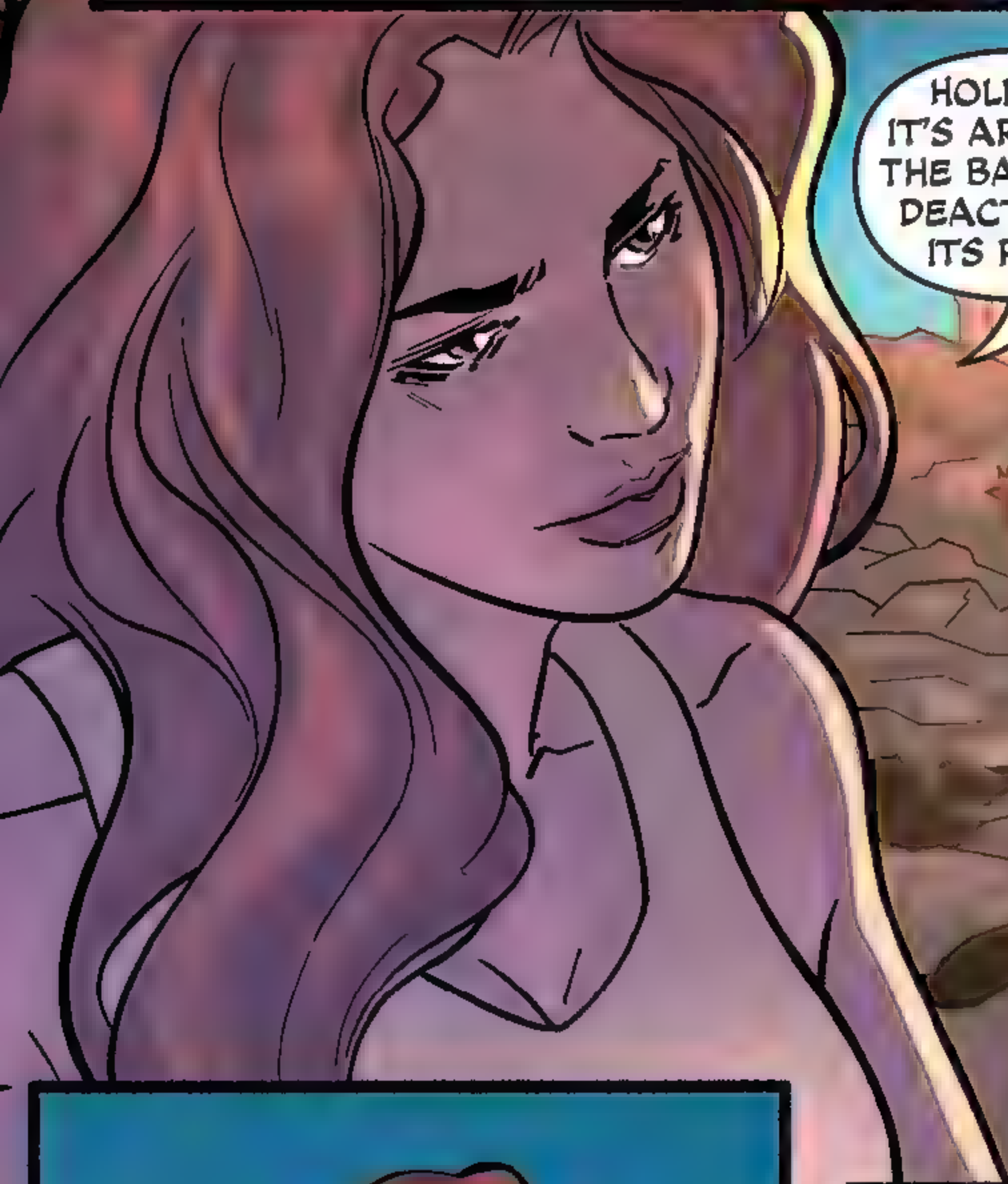
FEAR NOT, FAYE. THE FIRE SHINES BRIGHT.

AND, I AM MERELY SITTING WITH MY THOUGHTS. ENJOYING THE PEACE AND QUIET...

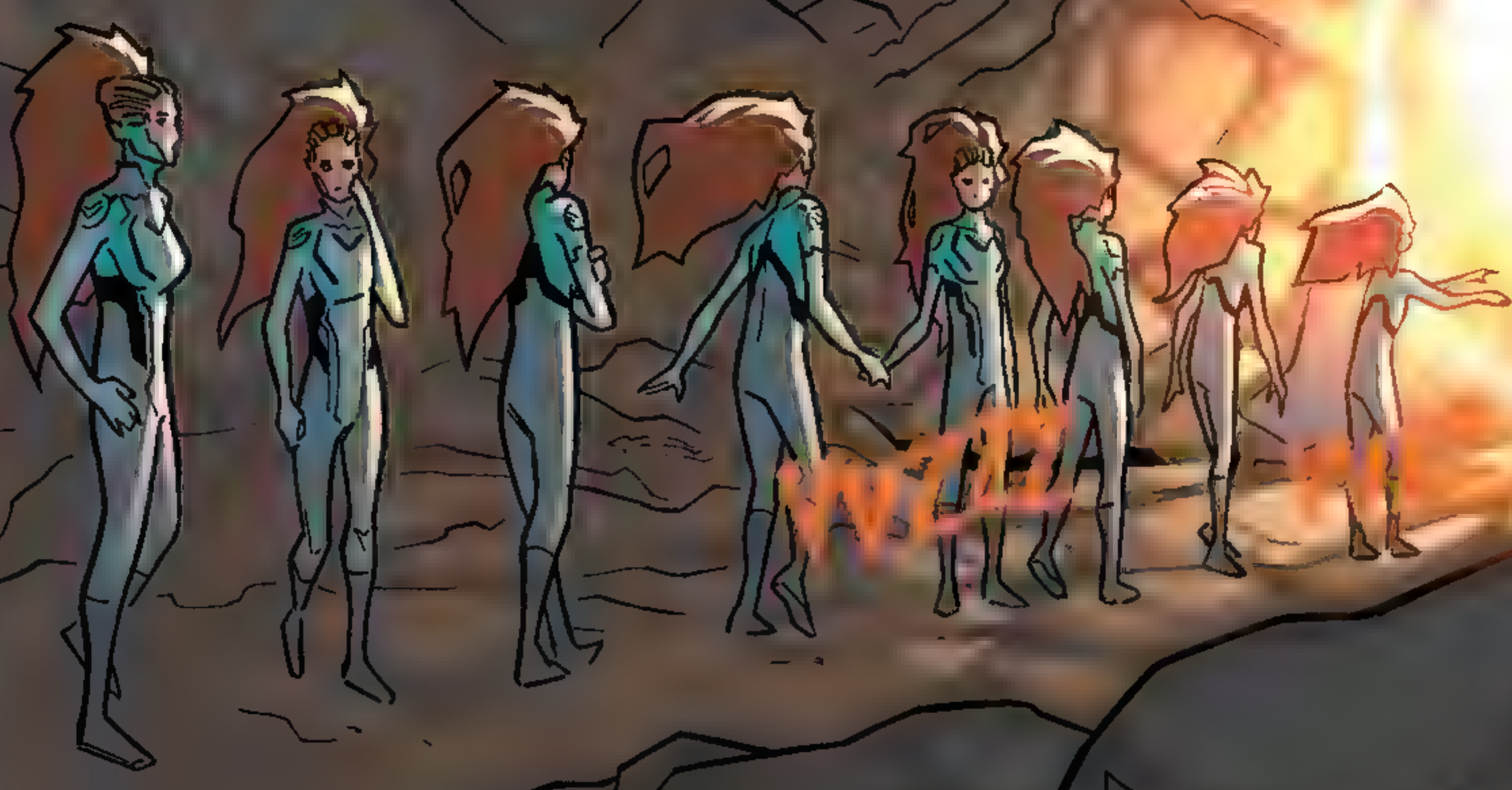
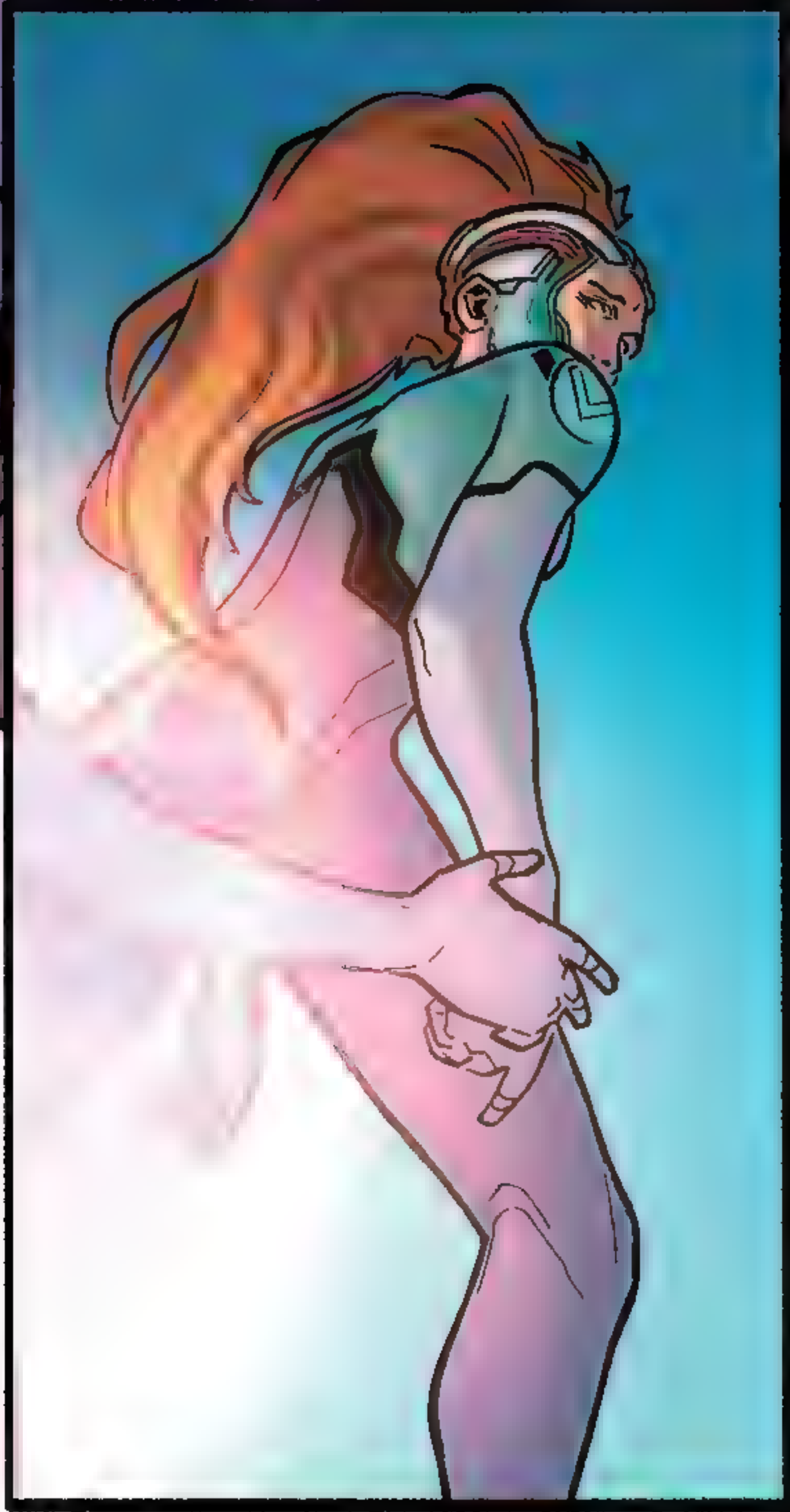


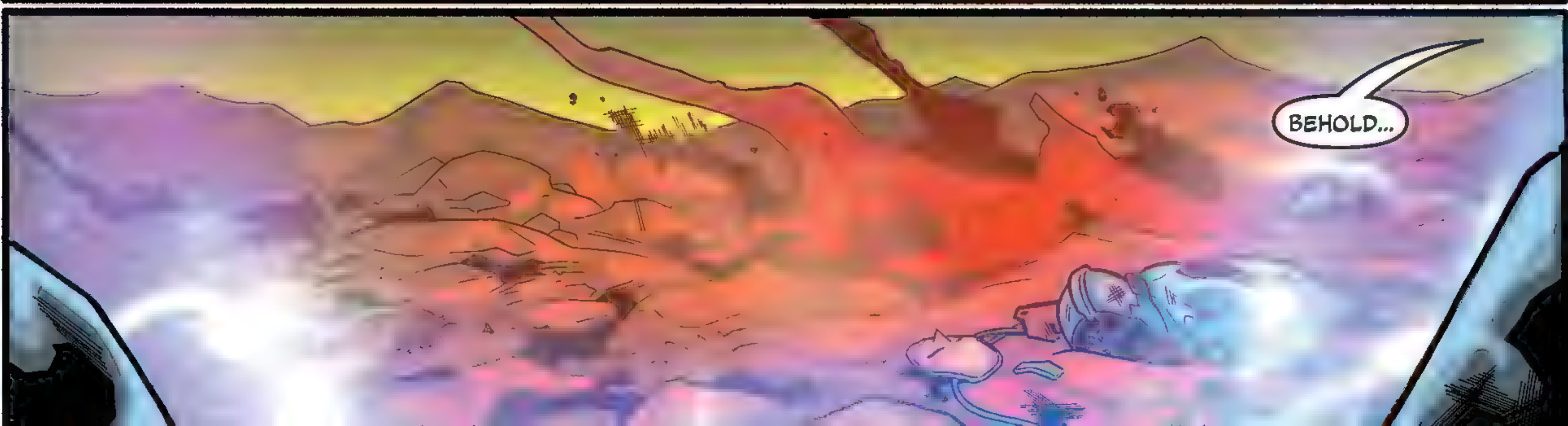
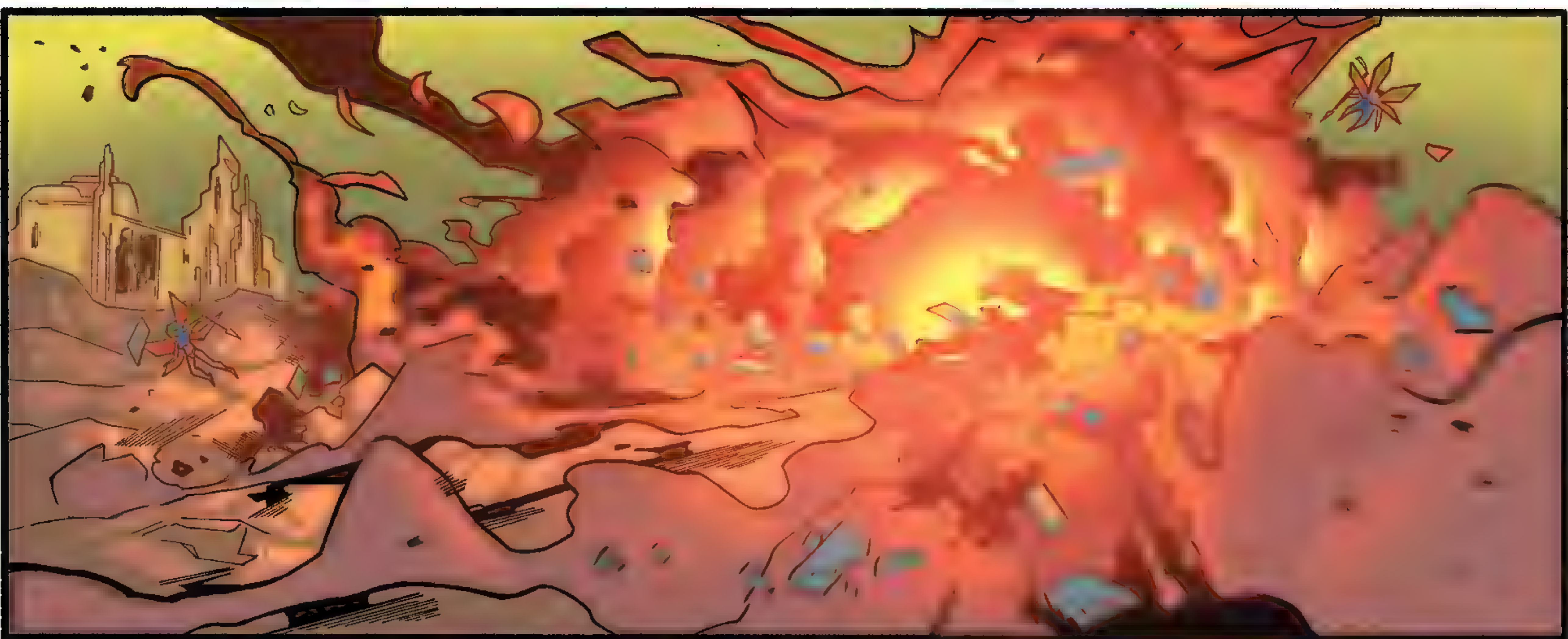
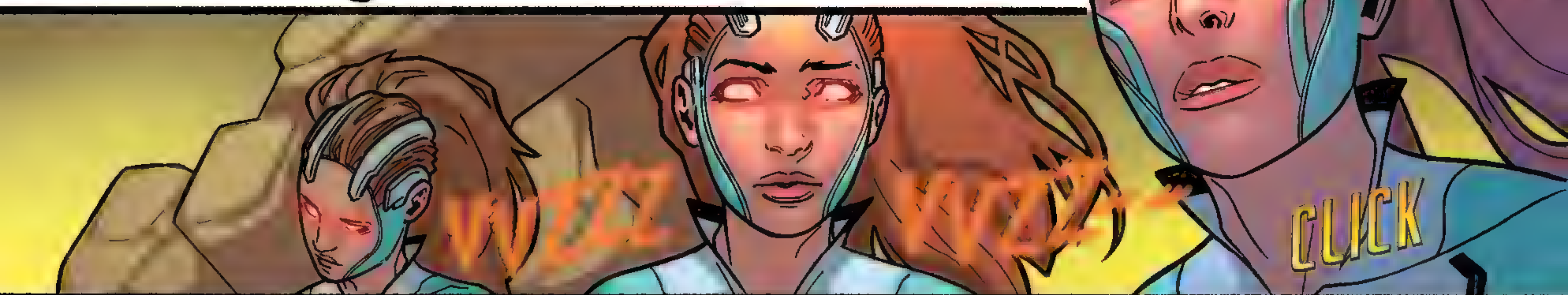


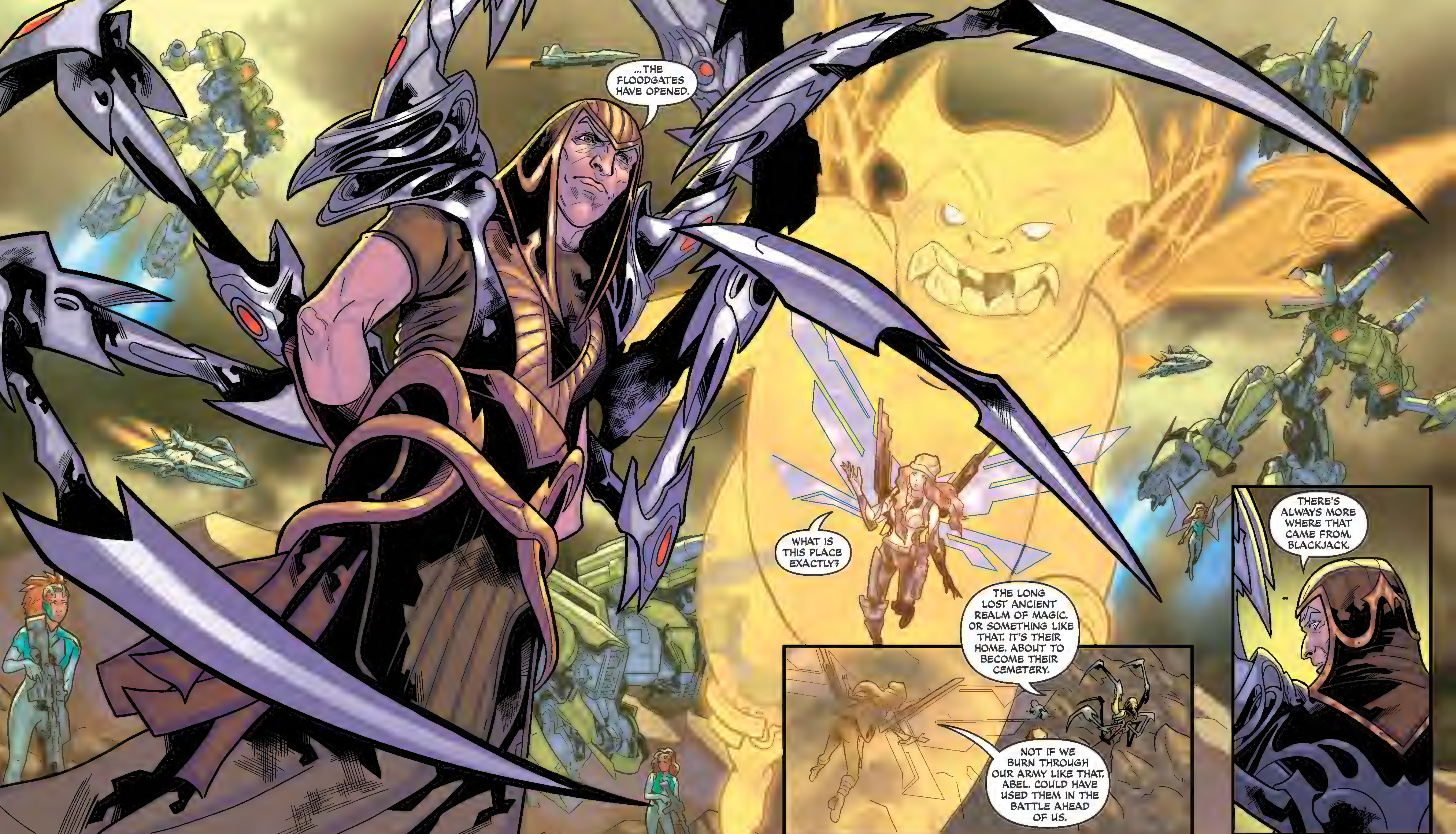
SYSTEM FAILURE.



HOLD OFF.
IT'S ARTIFICIAL.
THE BARRIER IS
DEACTIVATING
ITS POWER.







...THE
FLOODGATES
HAVE OPENED.

WHAT IS
THIS PLACE
EXACTLY?

THE LONG
LOST ANCIENT
REALM OF MAGIC.
OR SOMETHING LIKE
THAT. IT'S THEIR
HOME. ABOUT TO
BECOME THEIR
CEMETERY.

NOT IF WE
BURN THROUGH
OUR ARMY LIKE THAT.
ABEL. COULD HAVE
USED THEM IN THE
BATTLE AHEAD
OF US.

THERE'S
ALWAYS MORE
WHERE THAT
CAME FROM,
BLACKJACK.



BESIDES,
WE'VE GOT
PLENTY OF
MUSCLE ON
OUR SIDE.





THIS WAY,
BENOIST.

TO BE
CONTINUED.



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COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE

#5
OF 6



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Vol. 8
Cover B

SOULFIRE

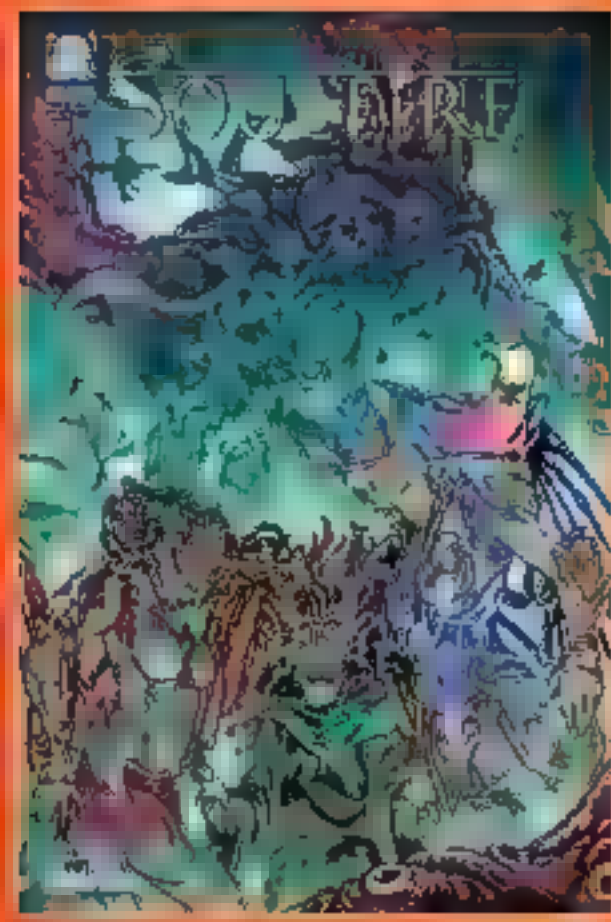
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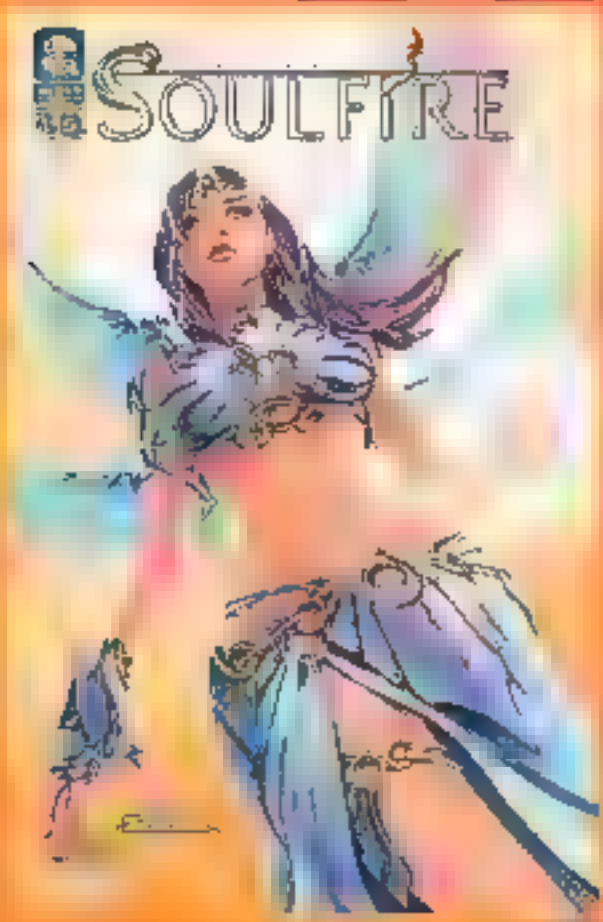
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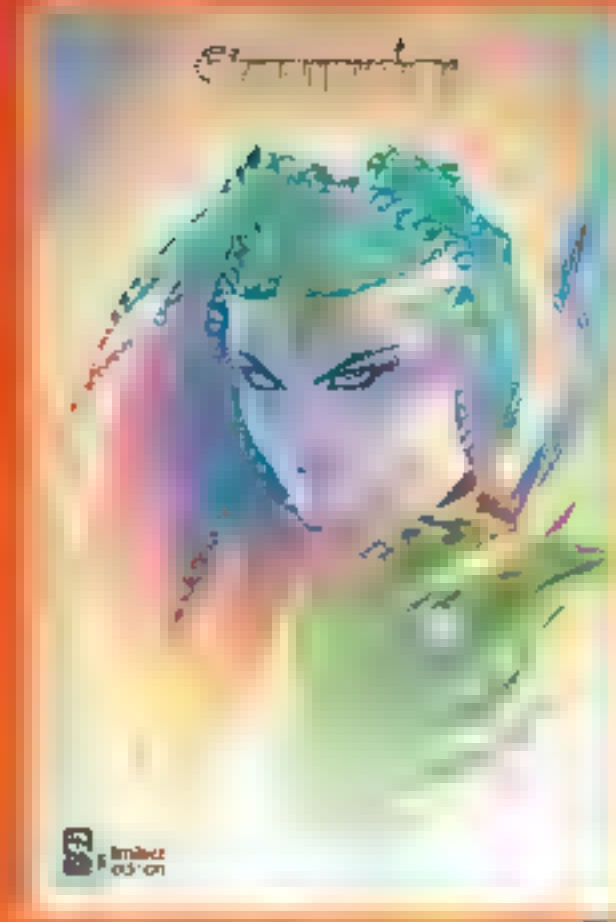
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C

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script

RAFFAELE FORTE

pencils

SARA IANNIELLO

inks

VALENTINA TADDEO

colors

ZEN

lettering

San Diego Comic-Con
ISSUE 5 OF 6

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Editors: Gabe Carrasco, Frank Masiromauro, Design and Production: Mark Roslan, Lettering fonts designed by Robin Spehar, Comcraft, Blambot

For Aspen: Founder: Michael Turner, Co-Owner: Peter Steigerwald, Co-Owner/President: Frank Masiromauro,
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FAYE WASN'T BORN INTO ROYALTY. HER EARLY DAYS LONG AGO WERE SIMPLE ONES.



BUT WHEN THE LIGHT BEGAN TO FADE, SHE WAS DRAWN INTO THE GREAT STRUGGLE TO ENDURE.



HER ASCENT TO THE THRONE IN THE MYSTICAL REALM OF *THE EVERLANDS* WAS OUT OF DUTY, NOT DESIGN. BUT, SERVE SHE DID AS THE *SETHORU* AND THE *RAHTUMI* CAME TOGETHER FOR A COMMON PURPOSE, SURVIVAL.



SIDE BY SIDE WITH A *SETHORU* KING, SHE SAW BOTH RACES THROUGH THE DARK AGES WHEN MAGIC WAS ALL BUT LOST.



NOW, CENTURIES LATER WITH THE MAGIC FINALLY RETURNED, FAYE THOUGHT THAT THE HARD PART WAS OVER.



THE MYSTICAL REALM
OF THE EVERLANDS.

NOT THAT, IN FACT,
THE WORST WAS
YET TO COME.

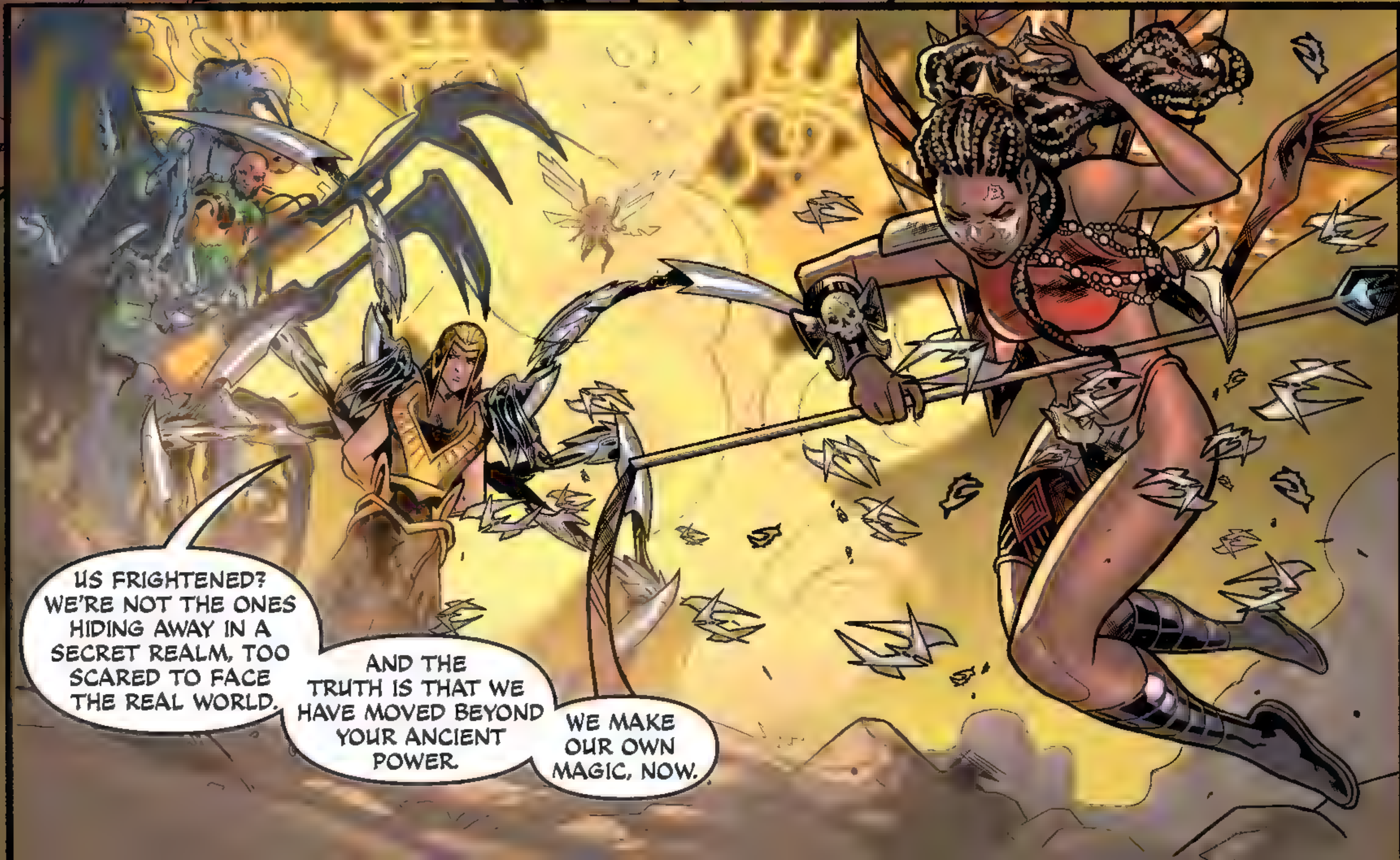


KEEP FIGHTING, WARRIORS.

THEY ARE TOO POWERFUL, *M/YA*. WE CANNOT DEFEAT THEM.

DON'T LET THEIR SIZE FOOL YOU. THESE METAL HULLS HAVE NOTHING BUT FRIGHTENED SOULS INSIDE.

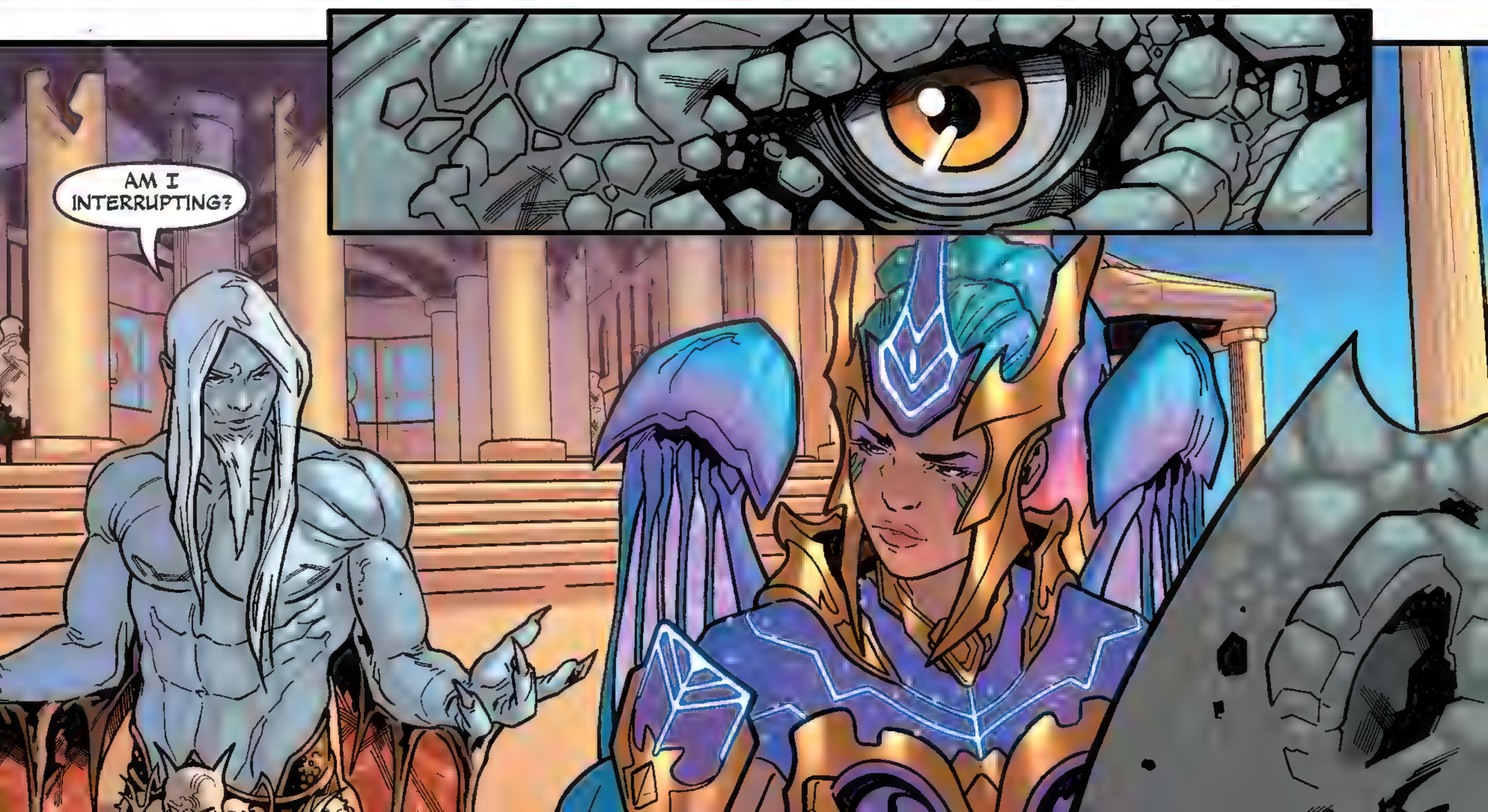
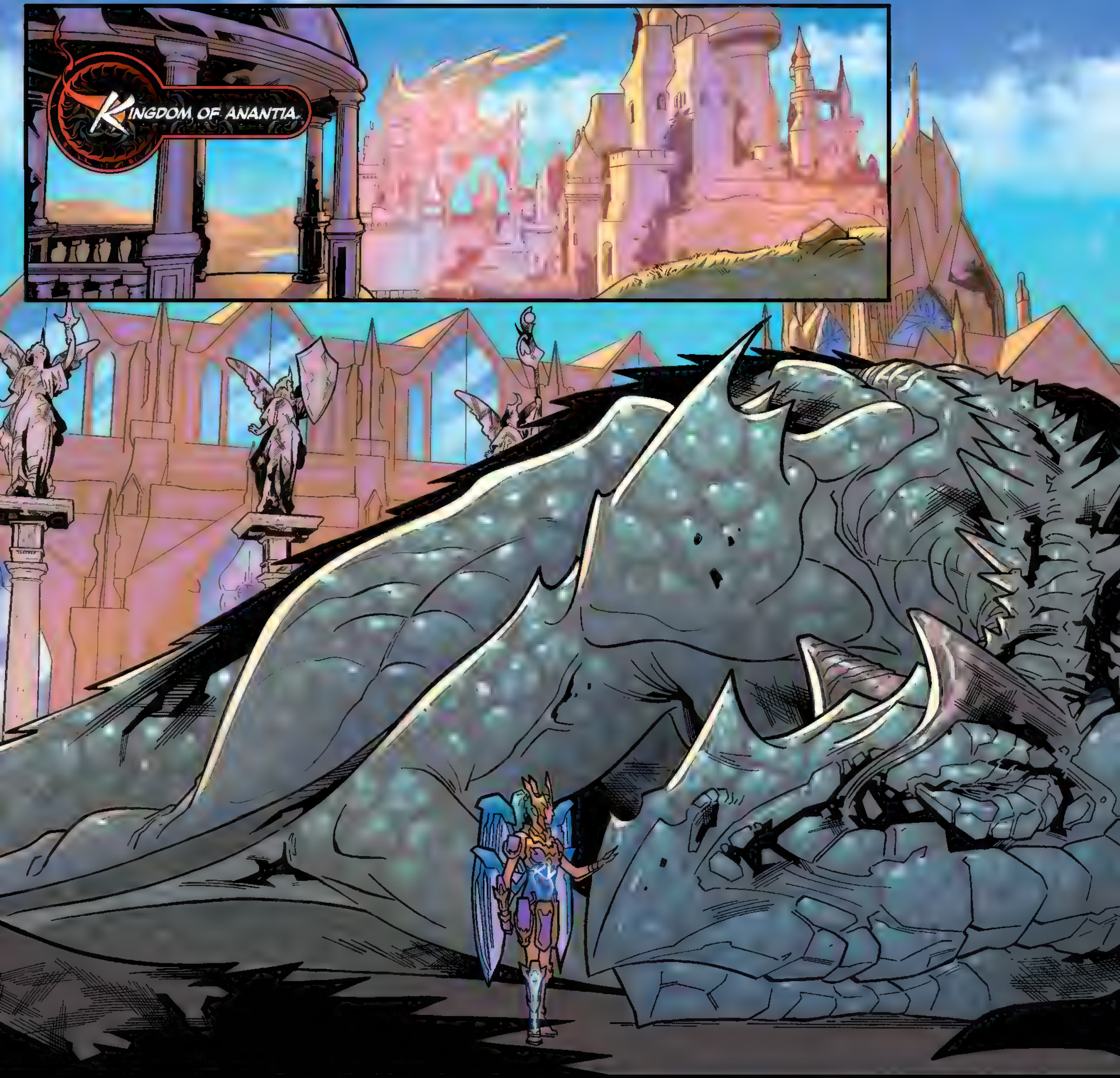
WE HAVE OUR HEARTS. BEATING STRONG!



US FRIGHTENED? WE'RE NOT THE ONES HIDING AWAY IN A SECRET REALM, TOO SCARED TO FACE THE REAL WORLD.

AND THE TRUTH IS THAT WE HAVE MOVED BEYOND YOUR ANCIENT POWER.

WE MAKE OUR OWN MAGIC, NOW.



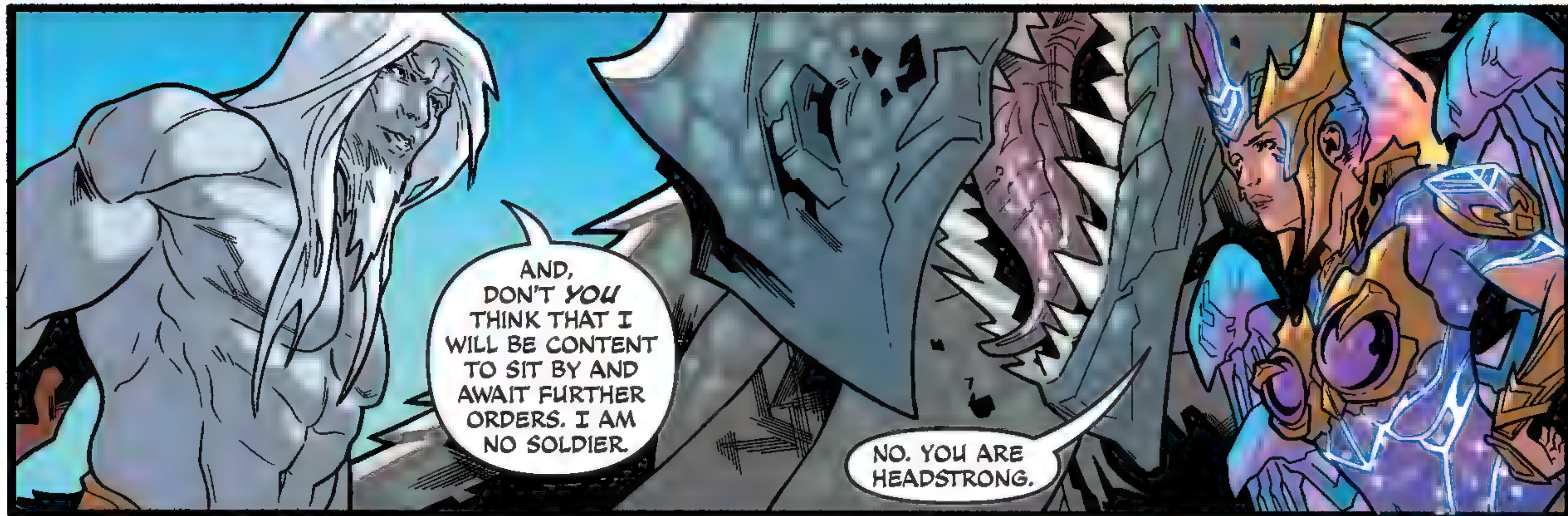


I WILL TAKE THAT AS A YES. OR, AT THE VERY LEAST, A MAYBE.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, RAINIER?

CAME TO TALK STRATEGY, *GRACE*. ABOUT OUR NEXT STEP. THERE ARE SEVERAL PROMINENT TARGETS THAT WE COULD SET OUR SIGHTS ON. REALLY STRIKE AT THE HEART OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE BEING GIVEN SAFE HAVEN HERE, DO NOT THINK WE ARE PARTNERS IN THIS.



AND, DON'T *YOU* THINK THAT I WILL BE CONTENT TO SIT BY AND AWAIT FURTHER ORDERS. I AM NO SOLDIER.

NO. YOU ARE HEADSTRONG.



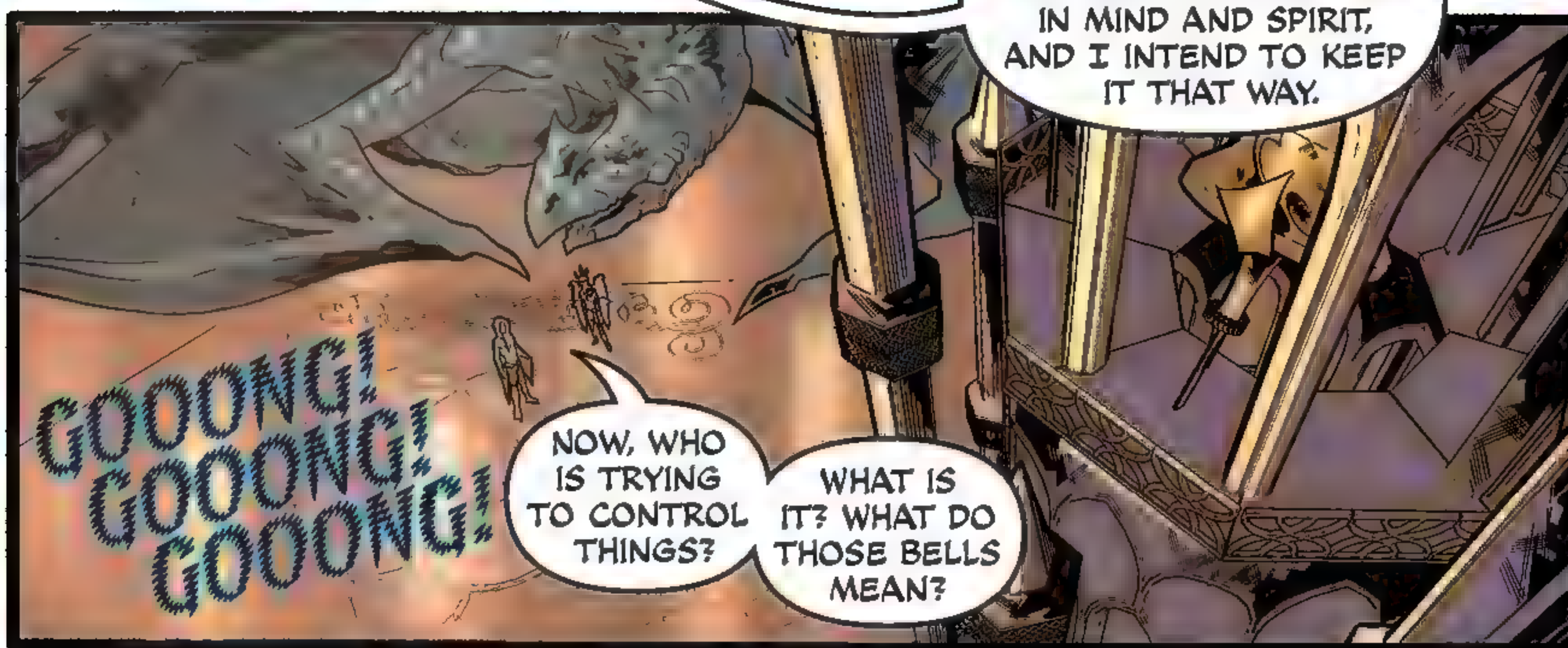
INDEED. I SET MY GOALS AND SEE THEM THROUGH. USING WHATEVER POWER I CAN. AND RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH. ESPECIALLY WITH THE DRAGONS AT OUR DISPOSAL.



AURORA IS NOT OURS TO CONTROL. NONE OF THE DRAGONS ARE.

THEY COULD BE. I KNOW A WAY.

DON'T EVEN THINK OF IT, RAINIER. THE DRAGONS ARE FREE IN MIND AND SPIRIT, AND I INTEND TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.



NOW, WHO IS TRYING TO CONTROL THINGS?

WHAT IS IT? WHAT DO THOSE BELLS MEAN?

"WAR."

...I TOLD MIYA I COULD FIGHT STILL, BUT SHE ORDERED ME TO FALL BACK TO BRING WORD TO YOU.

SO, THEY HAVE BREACHED OUR PORTAL, BRINGING THEIR TECHNOLOGY WITH THEM. HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN?

IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME, *SARIN*. NO SECRET STAYS SECRET. NOT FOREVER.

YOU ARE TO BLAME, GRACE! YOU HAVE BROUGHT THIS CARNAGE TO OUR BORDERS, PUTTING US ALL IN DANGER. NOT DOUBT, THEY TRACKED YOU HERE. SEEKING TO FINISH THE FIGHT YOU BEGAN.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE NOT ONE TO HIDE AWAY, *SARIN*.

NOR AM I ONE TO EXPOSE MYSELF TO NO ADVANTAGE.

OR, PERHAPS I AM WRONG. PERHAPS, THE FINGER SHOULD BE POINTED AT THE SO-CALLED CHOSEN ONE AND HIS BOY.

WHO ARE YOU CALLING BOY???



BOY. MAN.
IT MAKES NO
DIFFERENCE. A
TRAITOR CAN
BE ANY AGE.

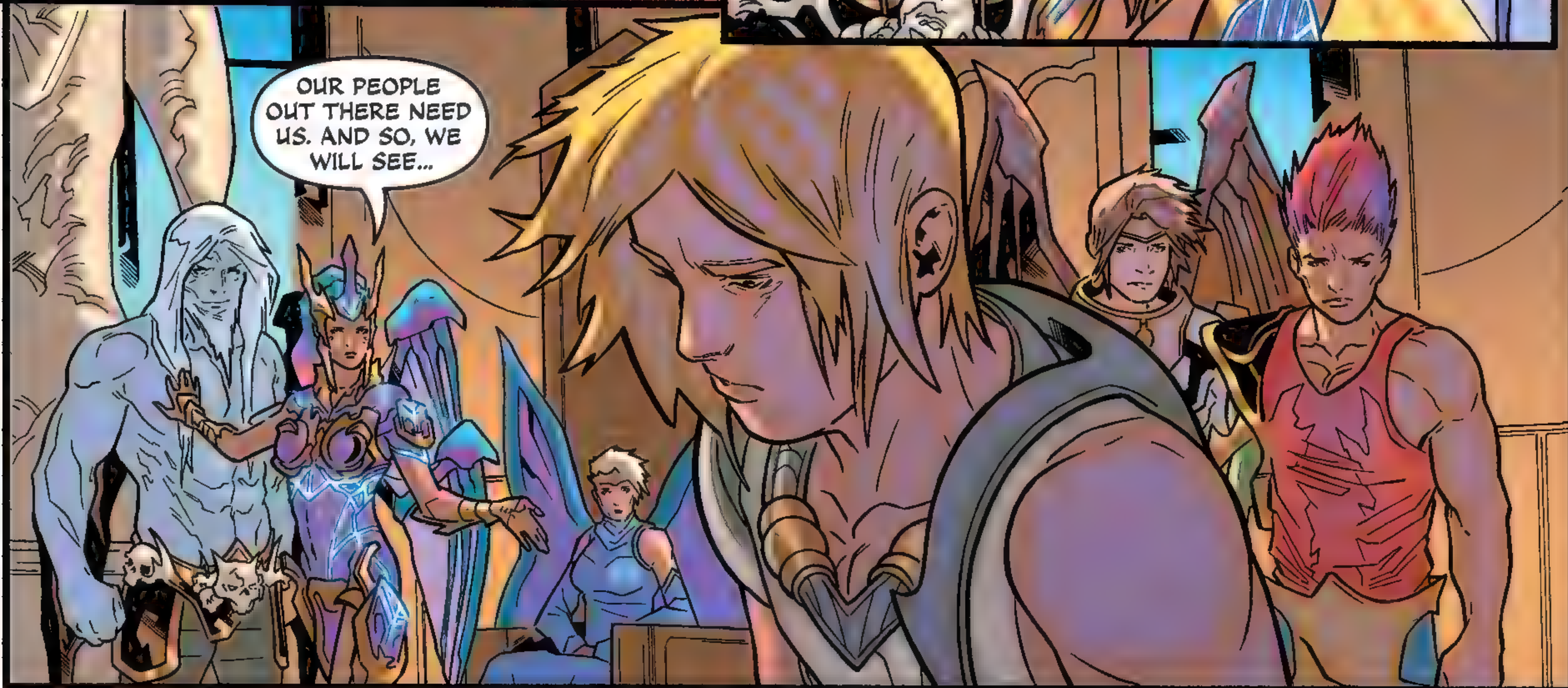
I'M NOT A
TRAITOR. I DIDN'T
LIE ABOUT WHERE I
STOOD IN THIS. I DIDN'T
COME TO FIGHT ALONG-
SIDE YOU. I DIDN'T
COME TO FIGHT
AT ALL.



WE SHOULD
DEAL WITH HIM, NOW.
OTHERWISE, WE RISK HIM
BETRAYING US ON THE
BATTLEFIELD.



MALIKAI IS
NOT OUR ENEMY.
THE REAL FIGHT
IS WAITING FOR
US AT THE OUTER
EDGES OF THE
EVERLANDS.



OUR PEOPLE
OUT THERE NEED
US. AND SO, WE
WILL SEE...



"... WHO OUR
ALLIES
TRULY ARE."



THAT'S IT.
KEEP ON THEM,
JACKKNIFE. DON'T
LET THEM GET
AWAY.

NO CHANCE,
BARRACUDA. SEEMS
LIKE A SHAME THOUGH.
THIS IS THE PRETTIEST
DOGFIGHT I EVER
BEEN IN.

NOT FOR
LONG.



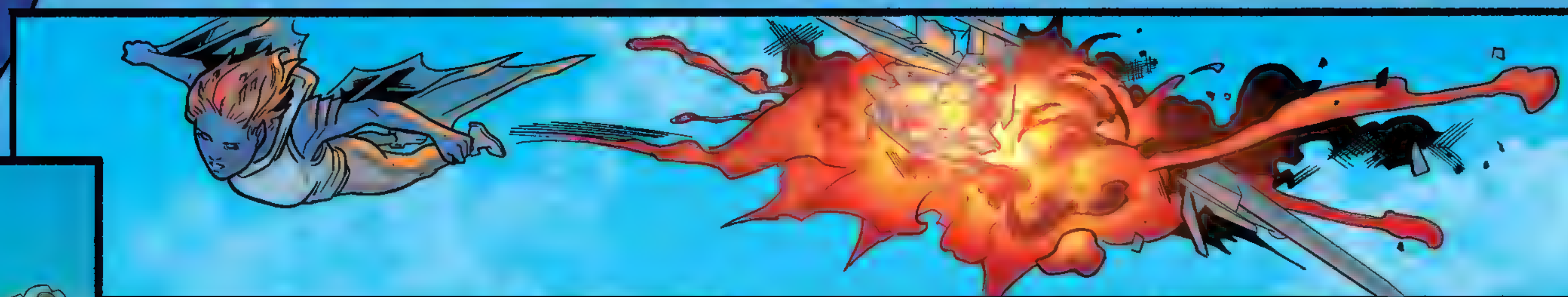
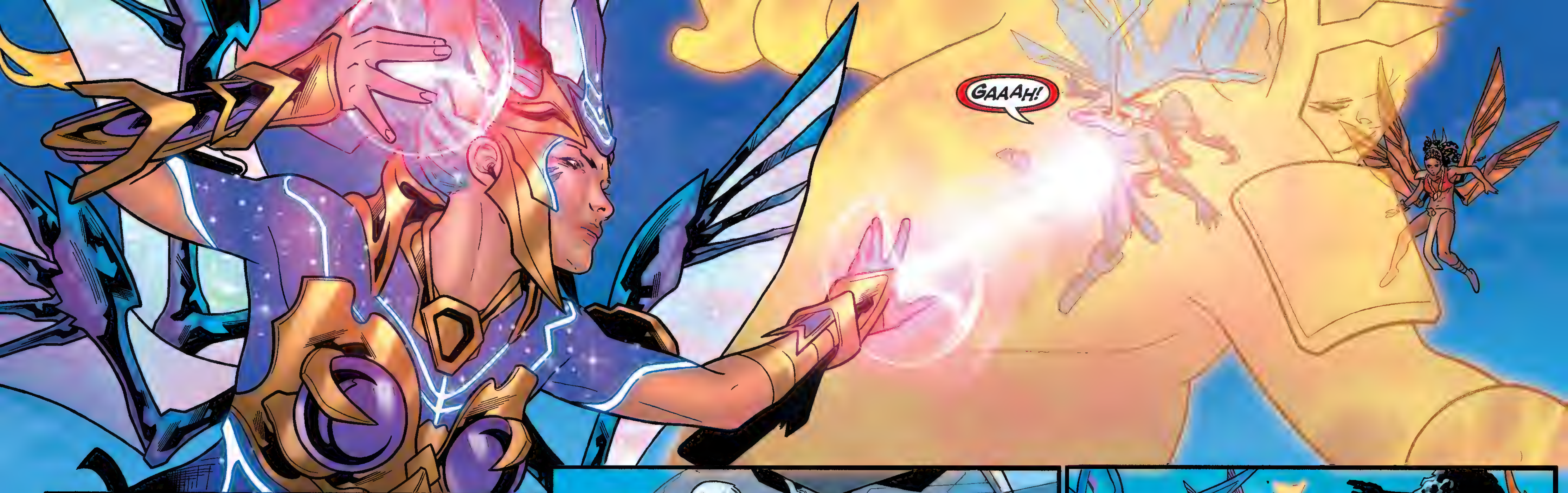
NOT SO
TOUGH NOW,
ARE YOU?

YOU'LL
PROBABLY BE
EVEN LESS SO
WHEN I TEAR
THEM WINGS
FROM YOUR
BACK.

NNN. BETTER
DO IT FAST.
BECAUSE...NNN...
TIME IS NOT ON
YOUR SIDE.



OH,
CRAP.





STATUS.

SENSORS ARE
ERRATIC, **COMMANDER
CORDELLA**. TOO MUCH
INTERFERENCE FROM
WHATEVER ENERGY
THIS IS.

CAN YOU GET
ANY READING
ON OUR FORCES
ON THE OTHER
SIDE?

NEGATIVE.

GUESS WE'LL
KNOW SOON
ENOUGH.



ABEL!

AH,
REINFORCEMENTS.
ABOUT TIME.

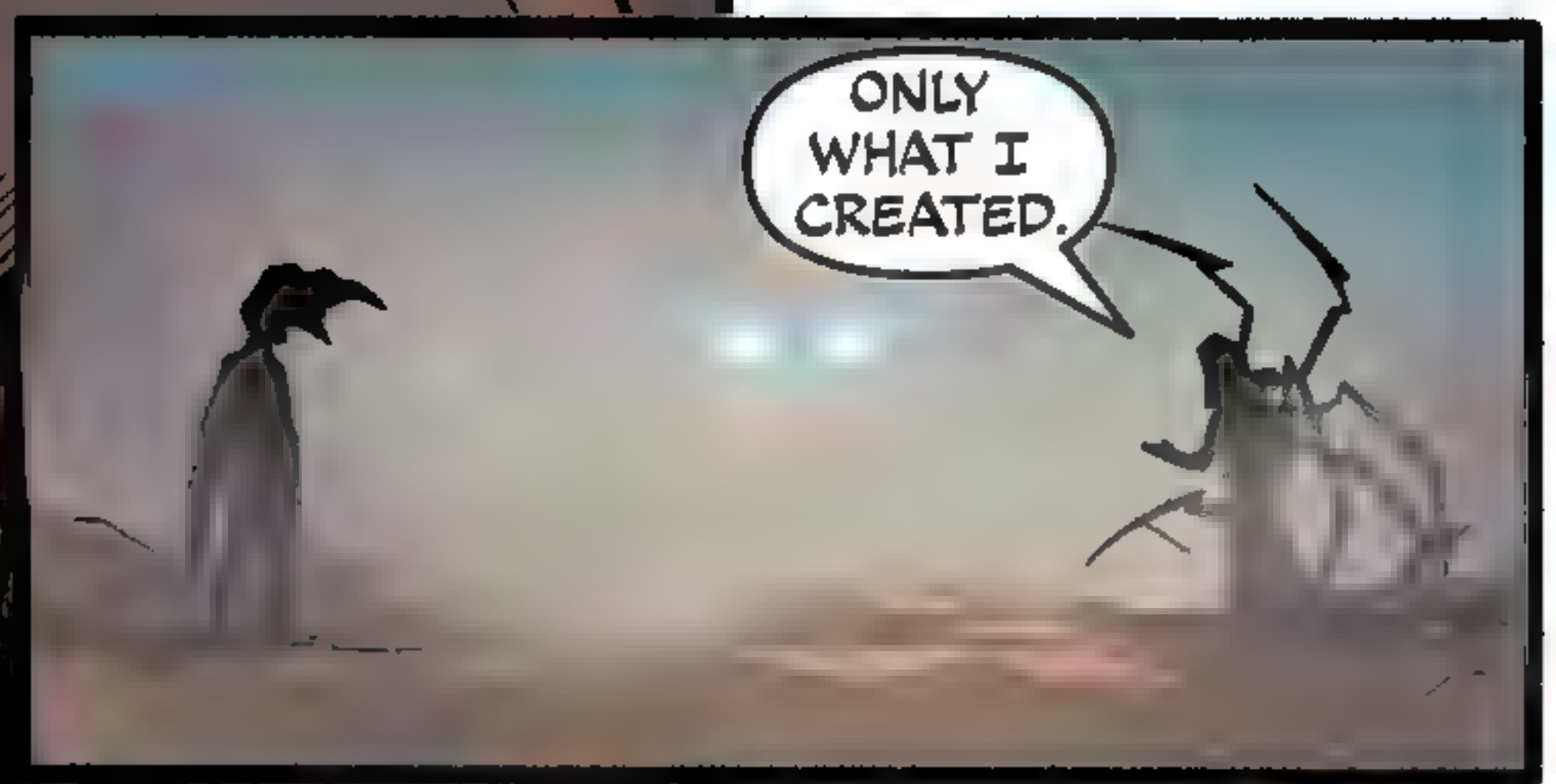
YOU ARE PART
OF THIS? YOU
DARE STAND
AGAINST ME?

YOU ARE
THE ONE WHO
CAST ME ASIDE,
RAINIER. YOU TURNED
YOUR BACK ON
EVERYTHING
WE BUILT.



WE? SO,
NOW YOU SEEK
TO TAKE CREDIT
FOR THE EMPIRE
I CREATED?

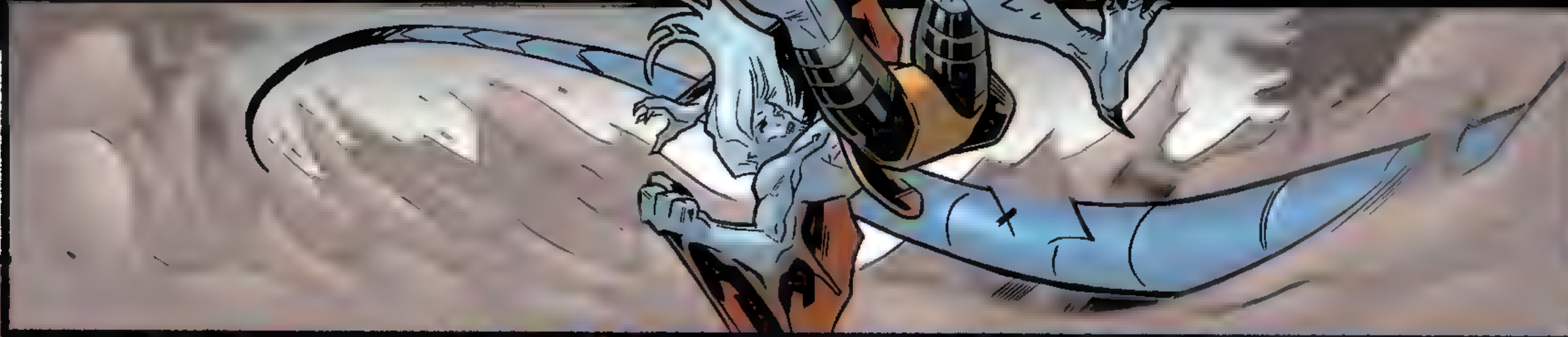
NOT
AT ALL.

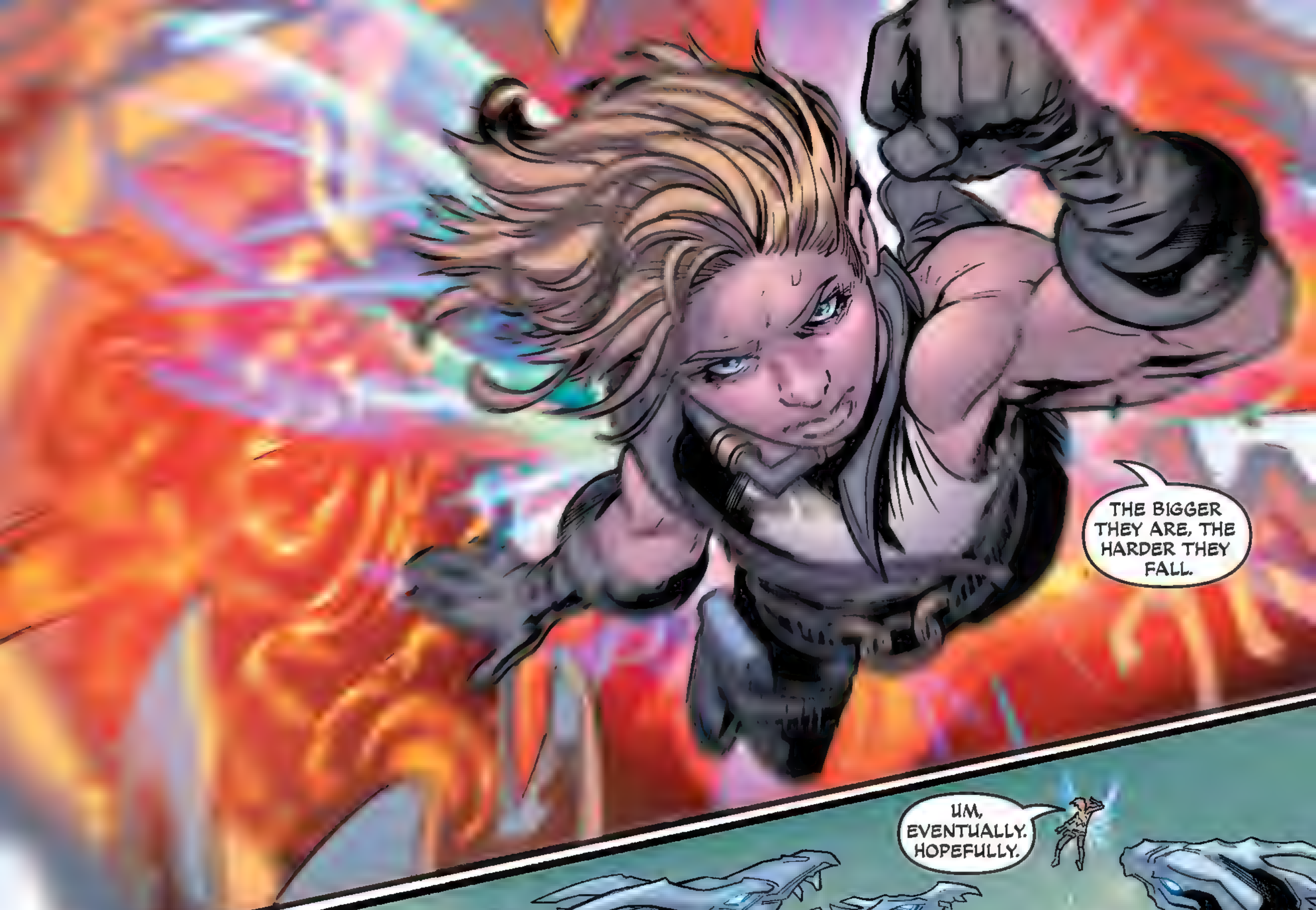


ONLY
WHAT I
CREATED.



MY OWN
KIND OF
MAGIC.





THE BIGGER
THEY ARE, THE
HARDER THEY
FALL.



UM,
EVENTUALLY.
HOPEFULLY.

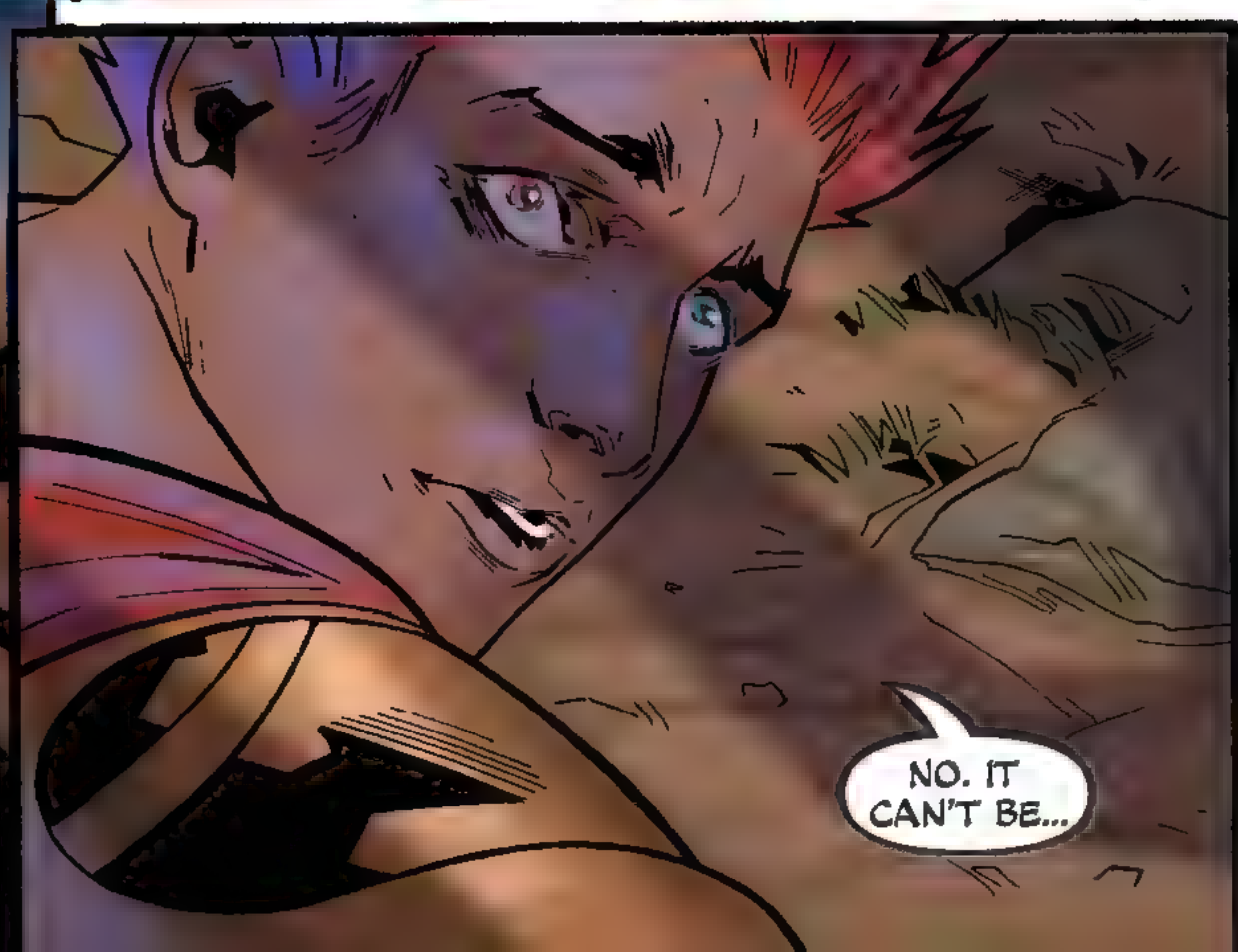


AHHH!



MAL! I'M
COMING!

CHNK
CHNK
CHNK



NO. IT
CAN'T BE...



BENOIST?
WH-WHAT
DID THEY DO
TO YOU?



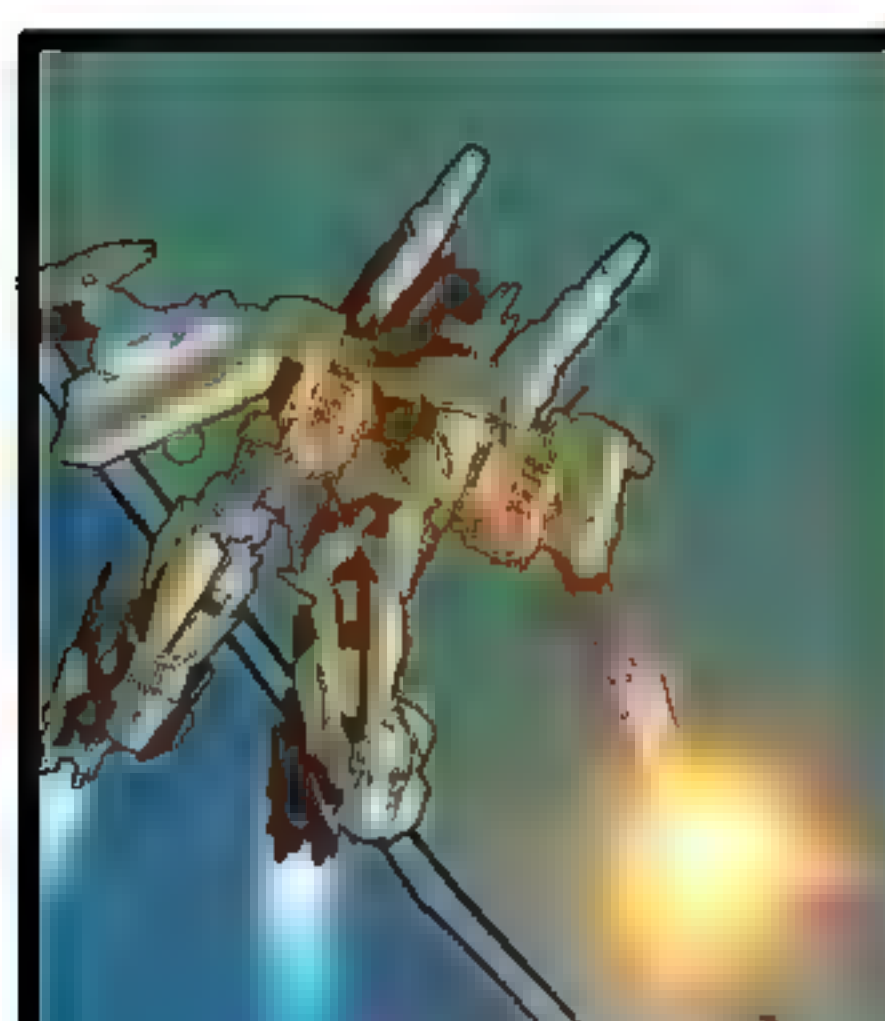
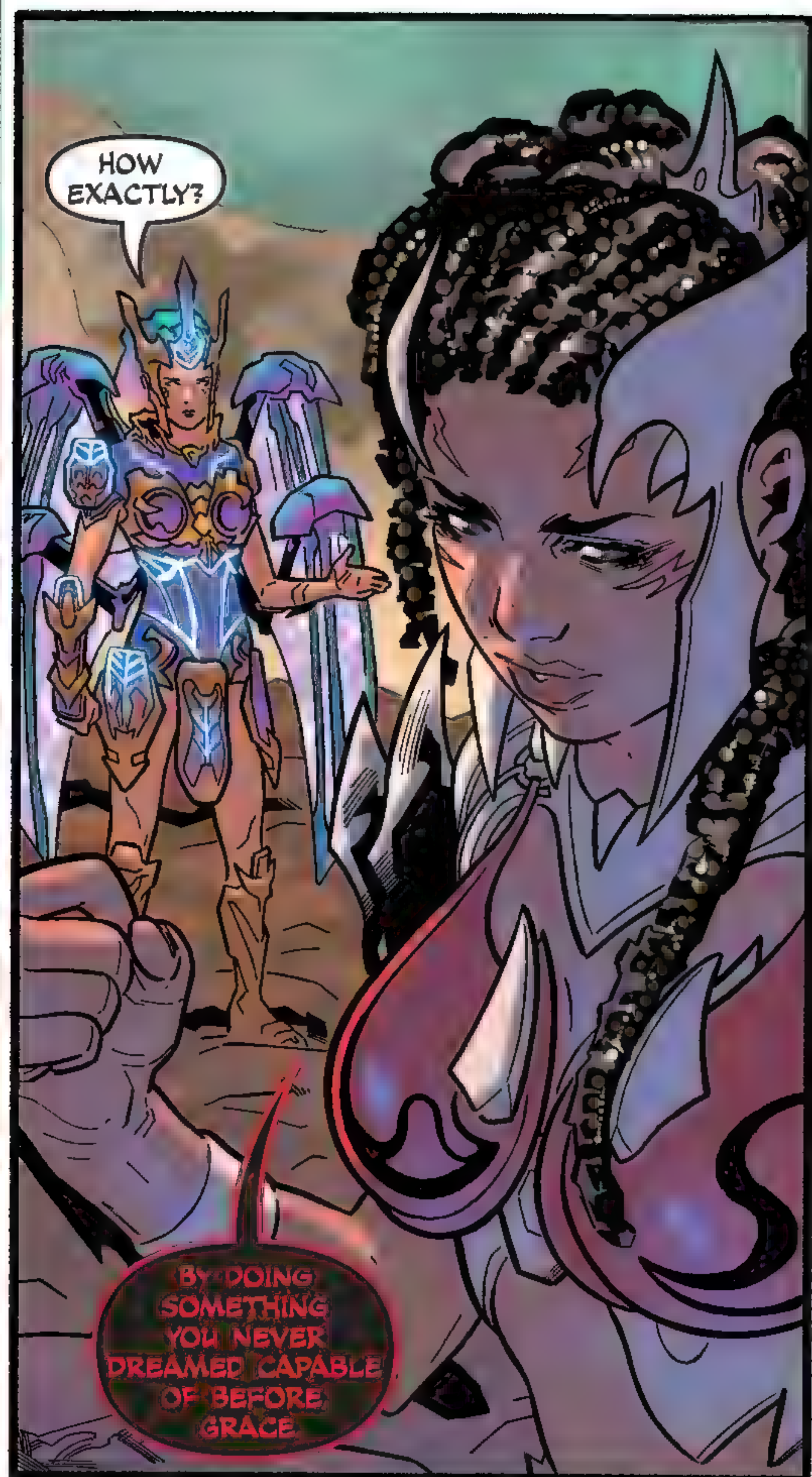
MAL, DON'T.
IT'S BENOIST.
YOU CAN'T
HURT HIM!

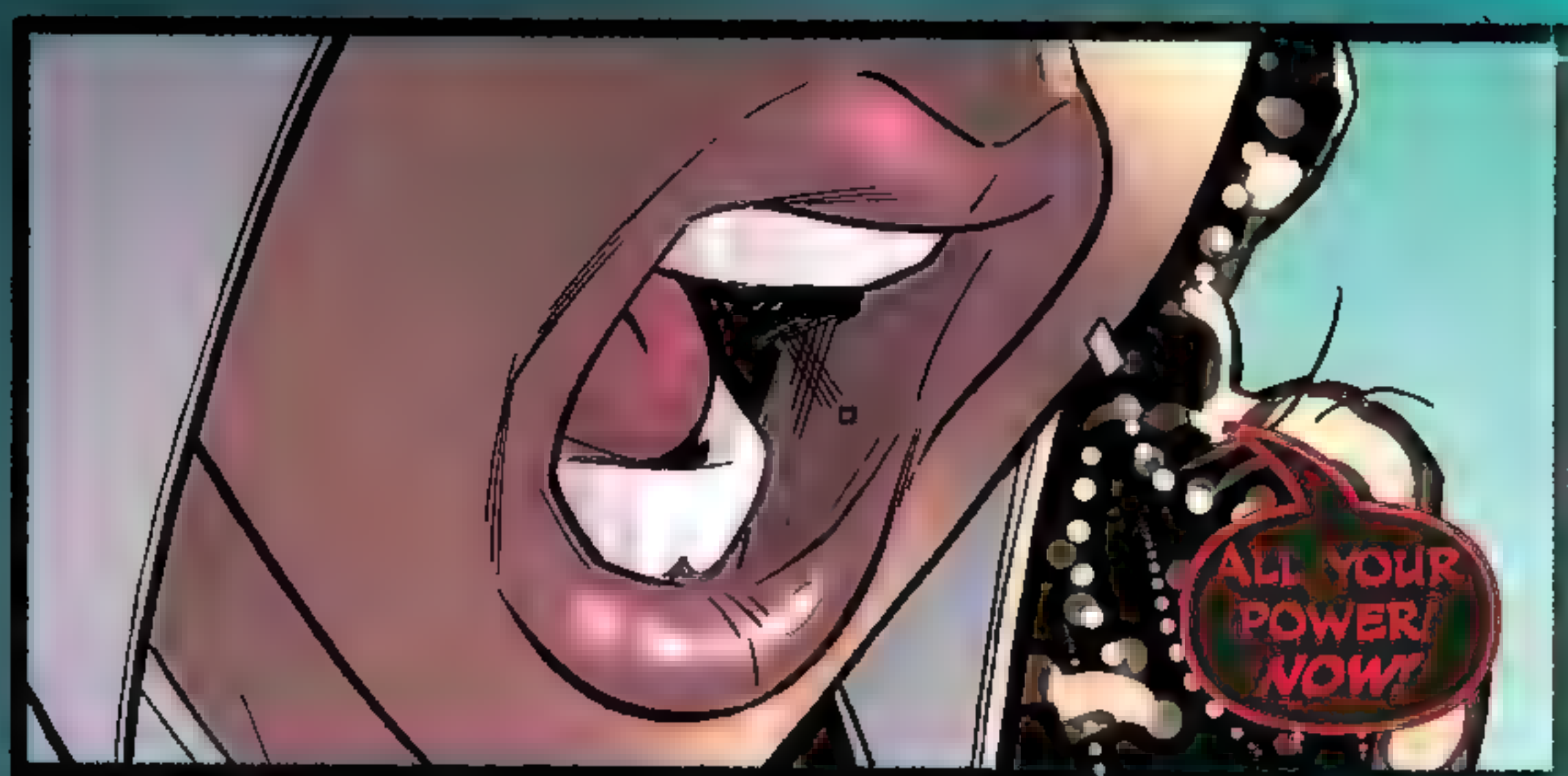
I KNOW.
BUT, I CAN'T
LET HIM
CRUSH YOU
EITHER.



HOW DO WE
FIGHT THOSE
THINGS?

I... I
DON'T
KNOW.









YES,
FINALLY, THE
UNTAMED POWER OF
MAGIC WILL SURGE
ONCE MORE. LET
THE CHAOS
REIGN

WHAT
HAVE I
DONE?

TO BE
CONTINUED



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VOL. 8

COVER A

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE #6

OF 6



J.T. KRUL
RAFFAELLE FORTE
SARA IANNIELLO
VALENTINA TADDEO
ZEN

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VOL. 8
COVER B

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OF 6

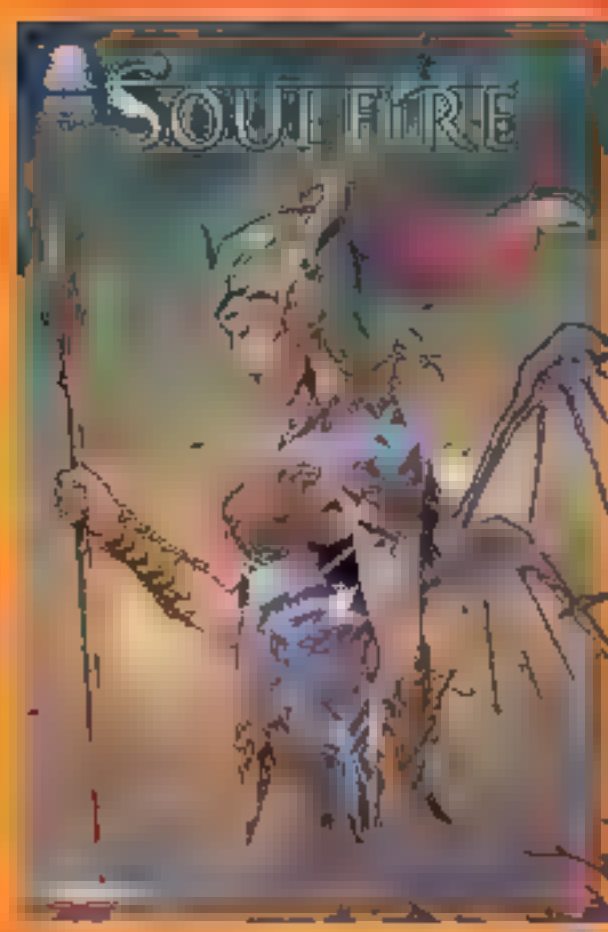


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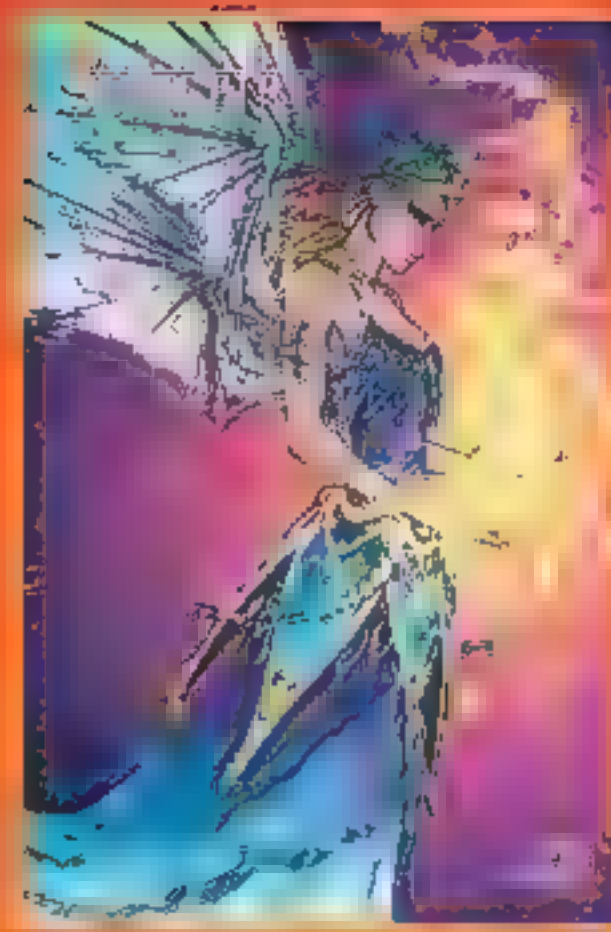
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“BROKEN WORLDS”

WAR HAS REACHED THE EVERLANDS—AND NO SIDE IS FREE FROM DANGER! THE KINGDOM CITY OF ANANTIA IS INVADDED AND THE BATTLE OF TECHNOLOGY VERSUS MAGIC REACHED ITS CLIMAX WITH BOTH SIDES FACING GREAT SACRIFICE. HOWEVER, IN THEIR DEFENSE, GRACE AND HER MAGICAL ALLIES DECIDED TO SUMMON A POWER MUCH GREATER THAN THEY COULD HOPE TO CONTROL—THE CHAOS CREATURES

—BORN OF SHADOW MAGIC—

J.T. KRUL
script

RAFFAELE FORTE
pencils

SARA IANNIELLO
inks

VALENTINA TADDEO
colors

ZEN
lettering

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SOULFIRE CREATED BY: MICHAEL TURNER

Editors: Gabe Carrasco, Frank Mastromauro, Design and Production: Mark Roslan, Lettering fonts designed by Robin Spehar, Comcraft, Blambot

For Aspen: Founder: Michael Turner, Co-Owner: Peter Steigerwald, Co-Owner/President: Frank Mastromauro,
Vice President/Editor in Chief: Vince Hernandez, Vice President/Design and Production: Mark Roslan, Managing Editor: Gabe Carrasco,
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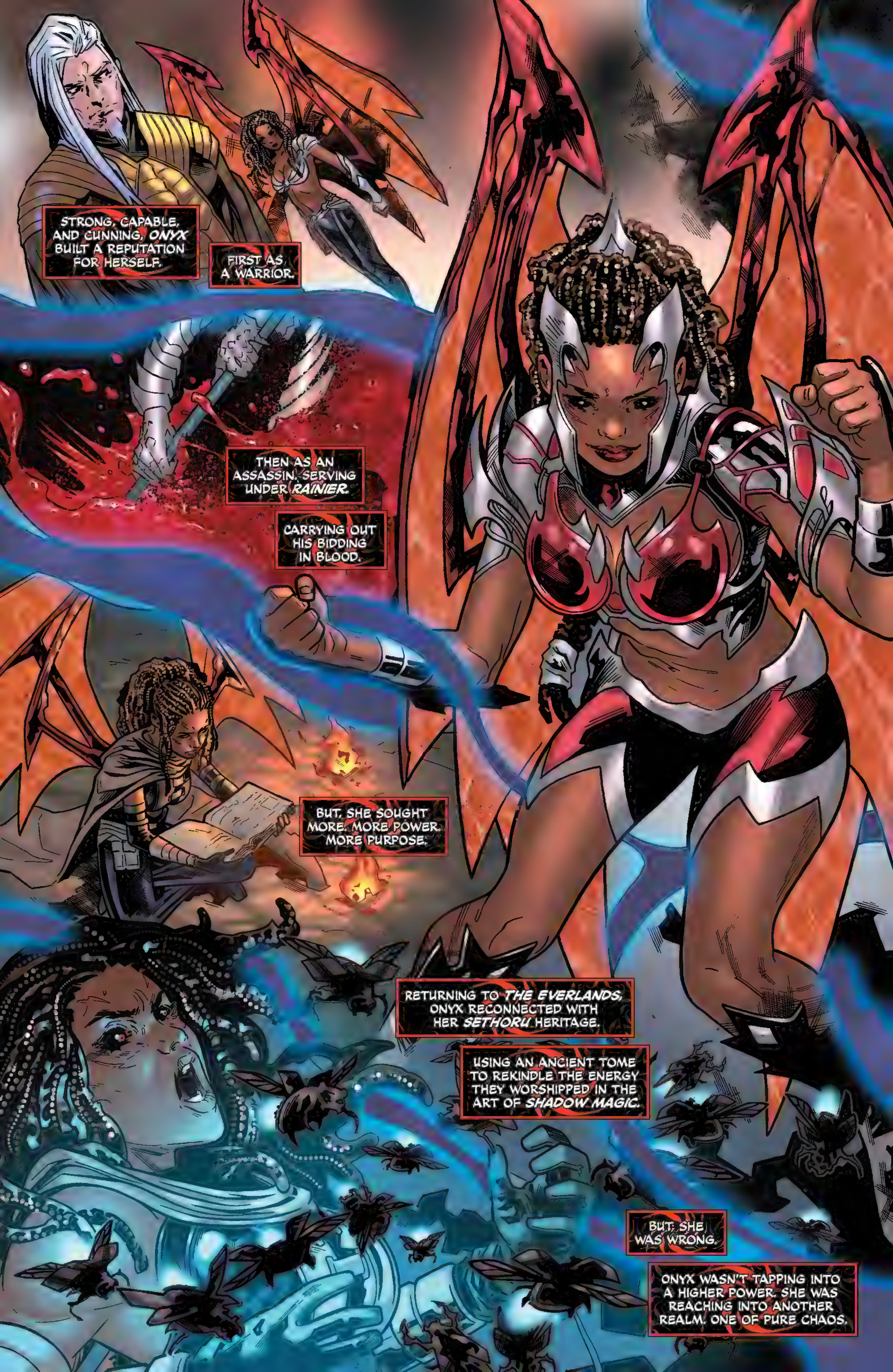
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STRONG, CAPABLE,
AND CUNNING, ONYX
BUILT A REPUTATION
FOR HERSELF.

FIRST AS
A WARRIOR.

THEN AS AN
ASSASSIN, SERVING
UNDER *RAINIER*.

CARRYING OUT
HIS BIDDING
IN BLOOD.

BUT, SHE SOUGHT
MORE, MORE POWER,
MORE PURPOSE.

RETURNING TO *THE EVERLANDS*,
ONYX RECONNECTED WITH
HER *SETHORU* HERITAGE.

USING AN ANCIENT TOME
TO REKINDLE THE ENERGY
THEY WORSHIPPED IN THE
ART OF *SHADOW MAGIC*.

BUT, SHE
WAS WRONG.

ONYX WASN'T TAPPING INTO
A HIGHER POWER. SHE WAS
REACHING INTO ANOTHER
REALM, ONE OF PURE CHAOS.



AND NOW, THANKS TO HER
AND THE MANIPULATION OF
OTHERS, THE CHAOS HAS
BEEN UNLEASHED.

I FEEL LIKE
I'M FIGHTING
EVERYBODY.

THOSE FROM
THE WORLD OF
TECHNOLOGY.

THOSE FROM THE
WORLD OF MAGIC.



OH, RIGHT--
AND MONSTERS.

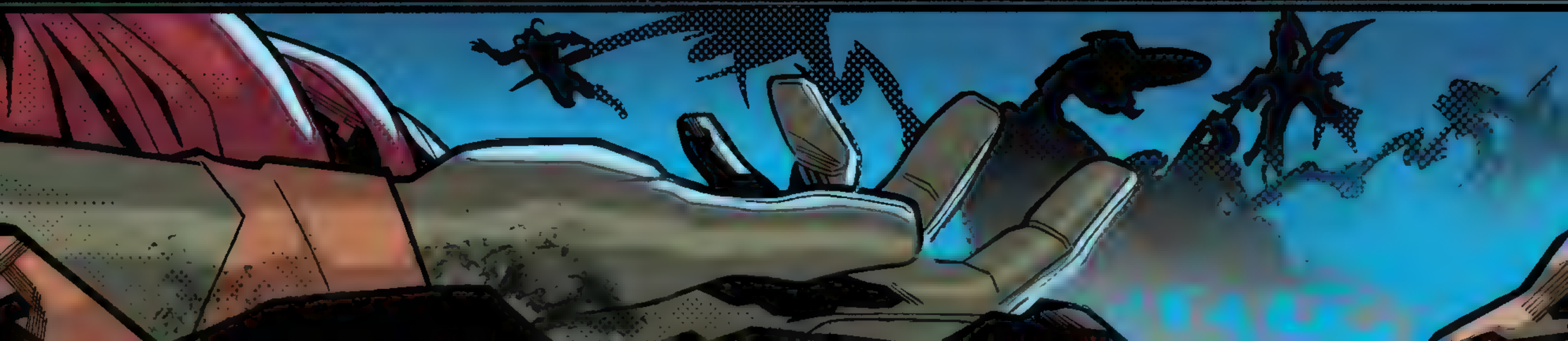
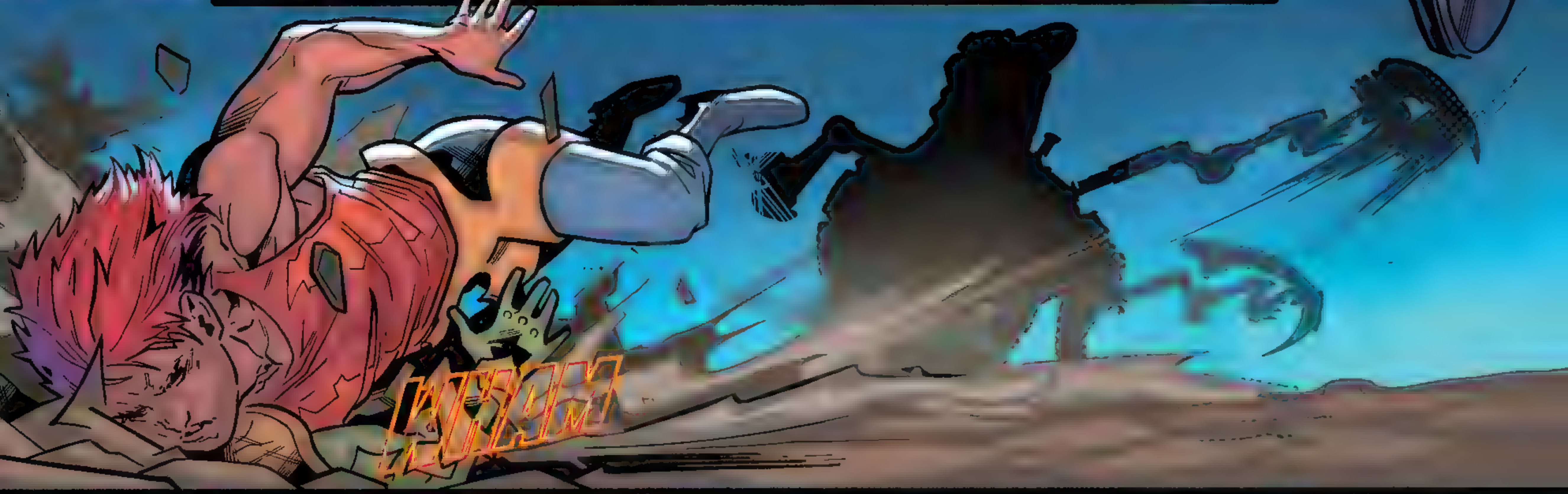
WHAT WERE YOU
THINKING, *GRACE*?!
UNLEASHING THESE
CREATURES? YOU KNOW
HOW DESTRUCTIVE
THEY ARE!

I DO,
MALIKAI.

THIS WASN'T
MY PLAN. ONYX
TRICKED ME INTO
OPENING SOME KIND
OF PORTAL TO
WHERE THESE
CREATURES
ARE FROM.

GREAT.
A LITERAL
PANDORA'S
BOX.

ANY IDEA
HOW TO
CLOSE IT?



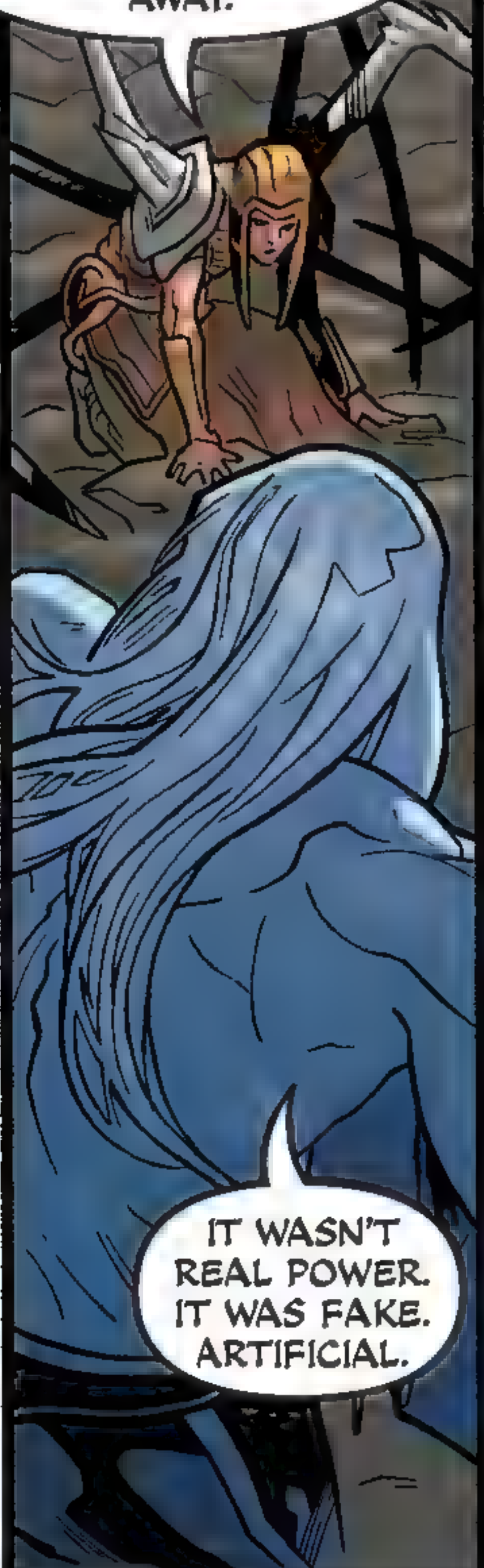


YOU MAY
LOOK SCARY, BUT
YOU'RE STILL JUST
FLESH AND BLOOD.
NO MATCH FOR
MY METAL.



ABEL, IF
ANYONE KNOWS
THE LIMITS OF
TECHNOLOGY,
IT SHOULD
BE YOU.

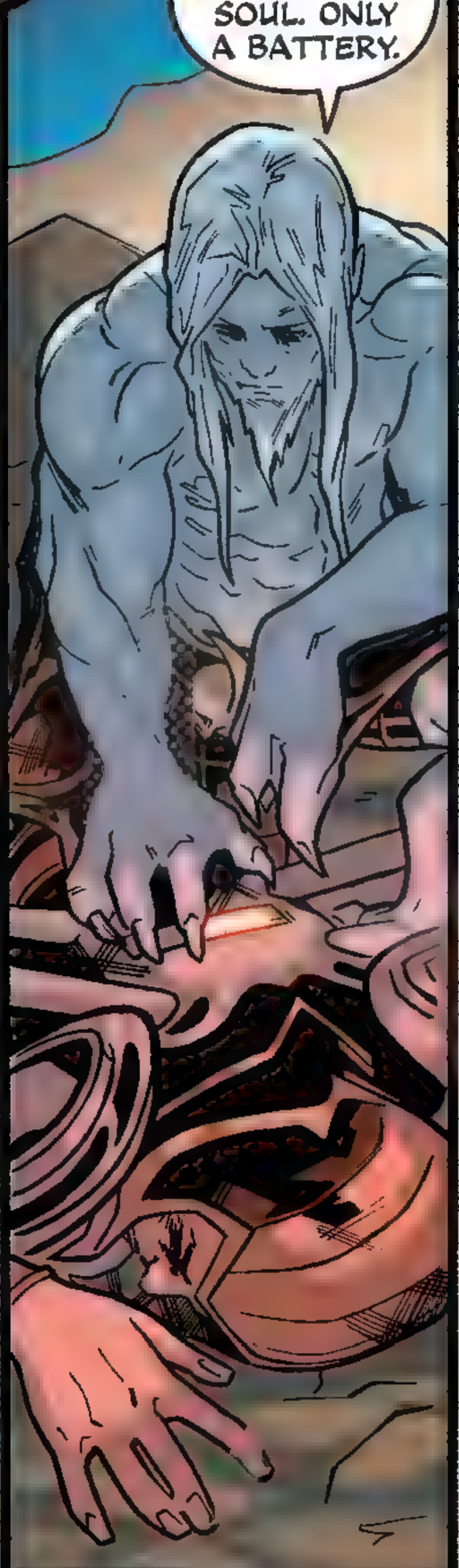
I LIKED YOU
BETTER THE OTHER
WAY, RAINIER. WE MADE
A GOOD TEAM. THEN, YOU
HAD TO GO AND THROW
ALL YOUR POWER
AWAY.



IT WASN'T
REAL POWER.
IT WAS FAKE.
ARTIFICIAL.



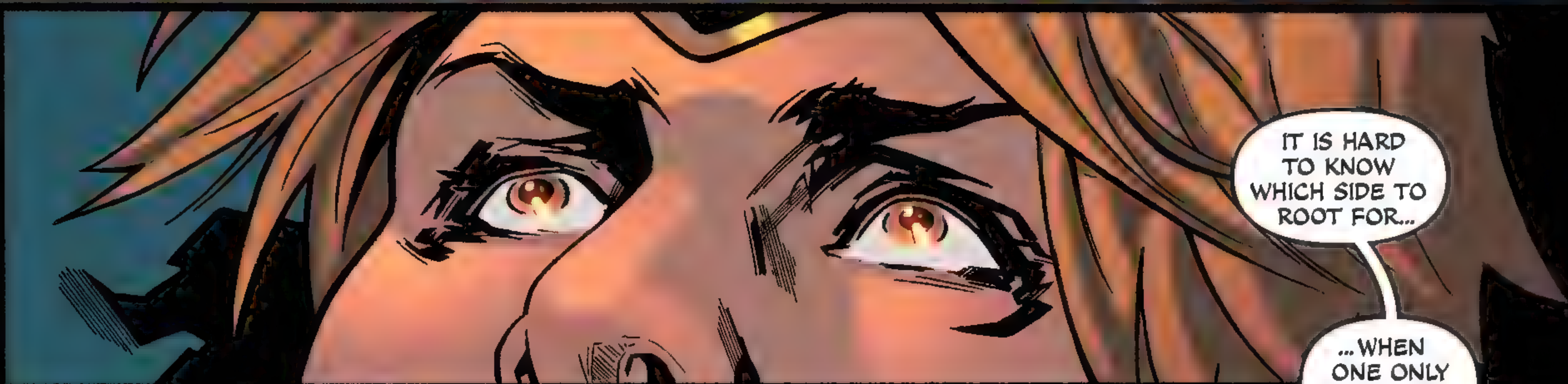
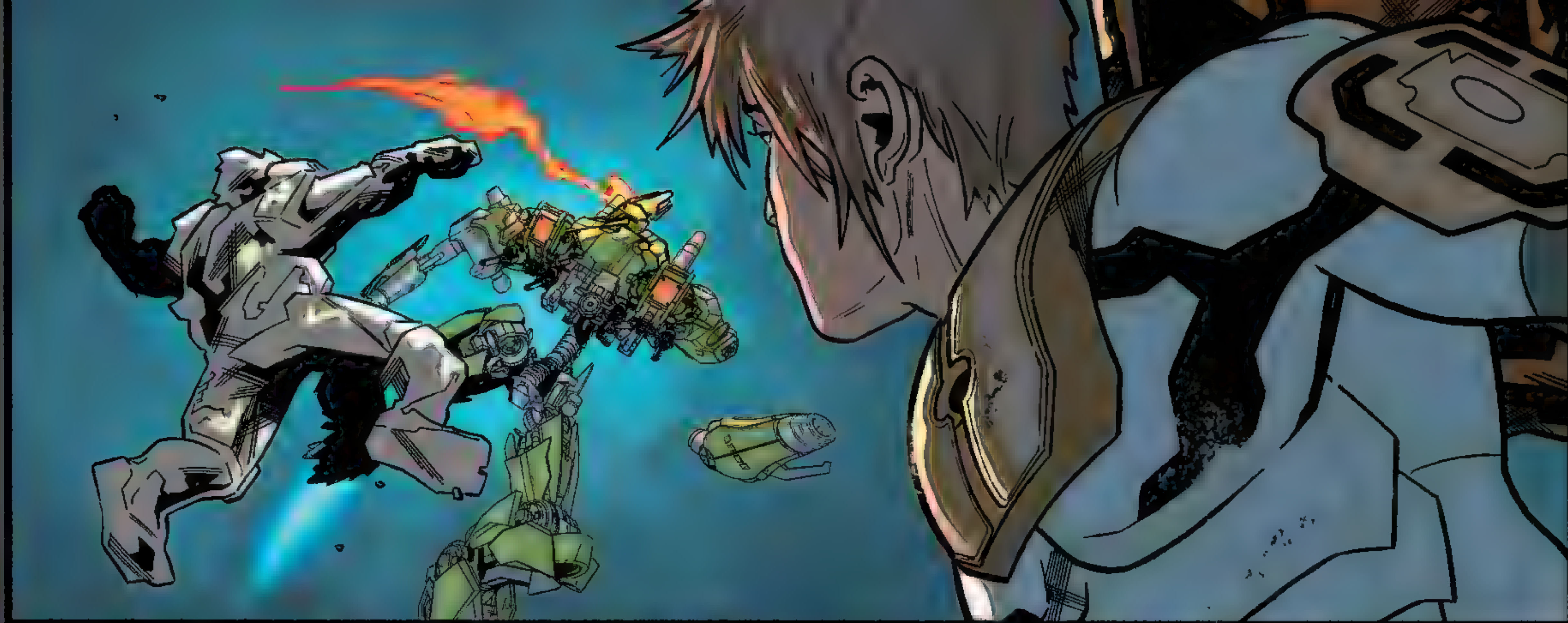
JUST
LIKE YOU.



YOU DON'T
HAVE A
SOUL. ONLY
A BATTERY.

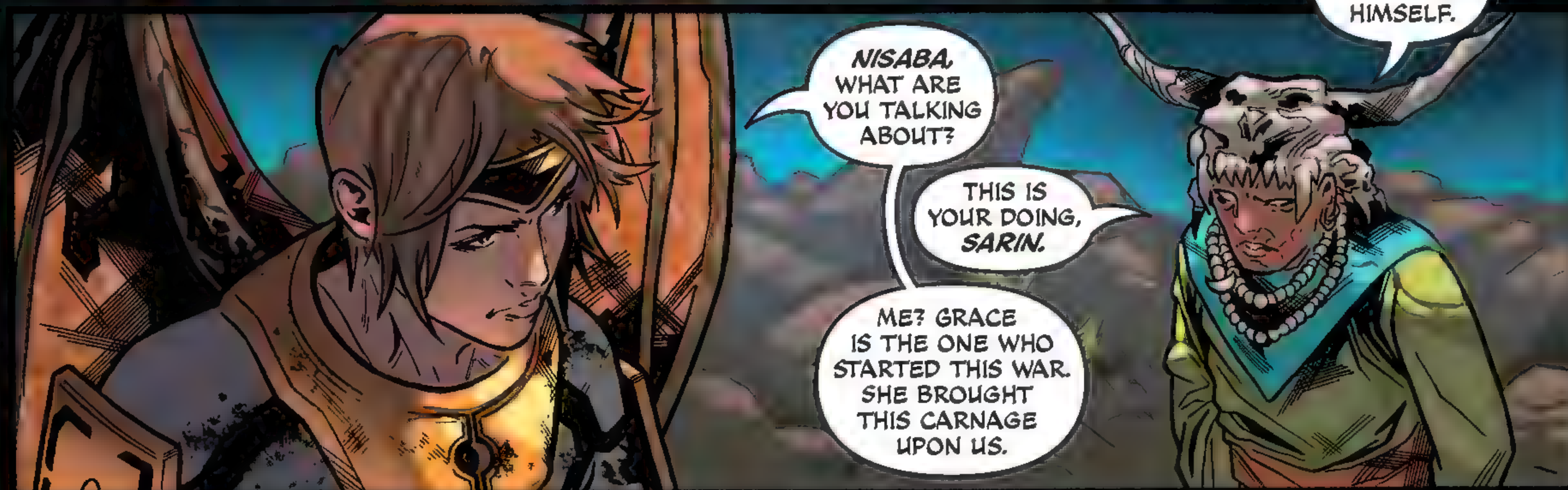


GAHHH!



IT IS HARD
TO KNOW
WHICH SIDE TO
ROOT FOR...

...WHEN
ONE ONLY
FIGHTS FOR
HIMSELF.



NISABA,
WHAT ARE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT?

THIS IS
YOUR DOING,
SARIN.

ME? GRACE
IS THE ONE WHO
STARTED THIS WAR.
SHE BROUGHT
THIS CARNAGE
UPON US.

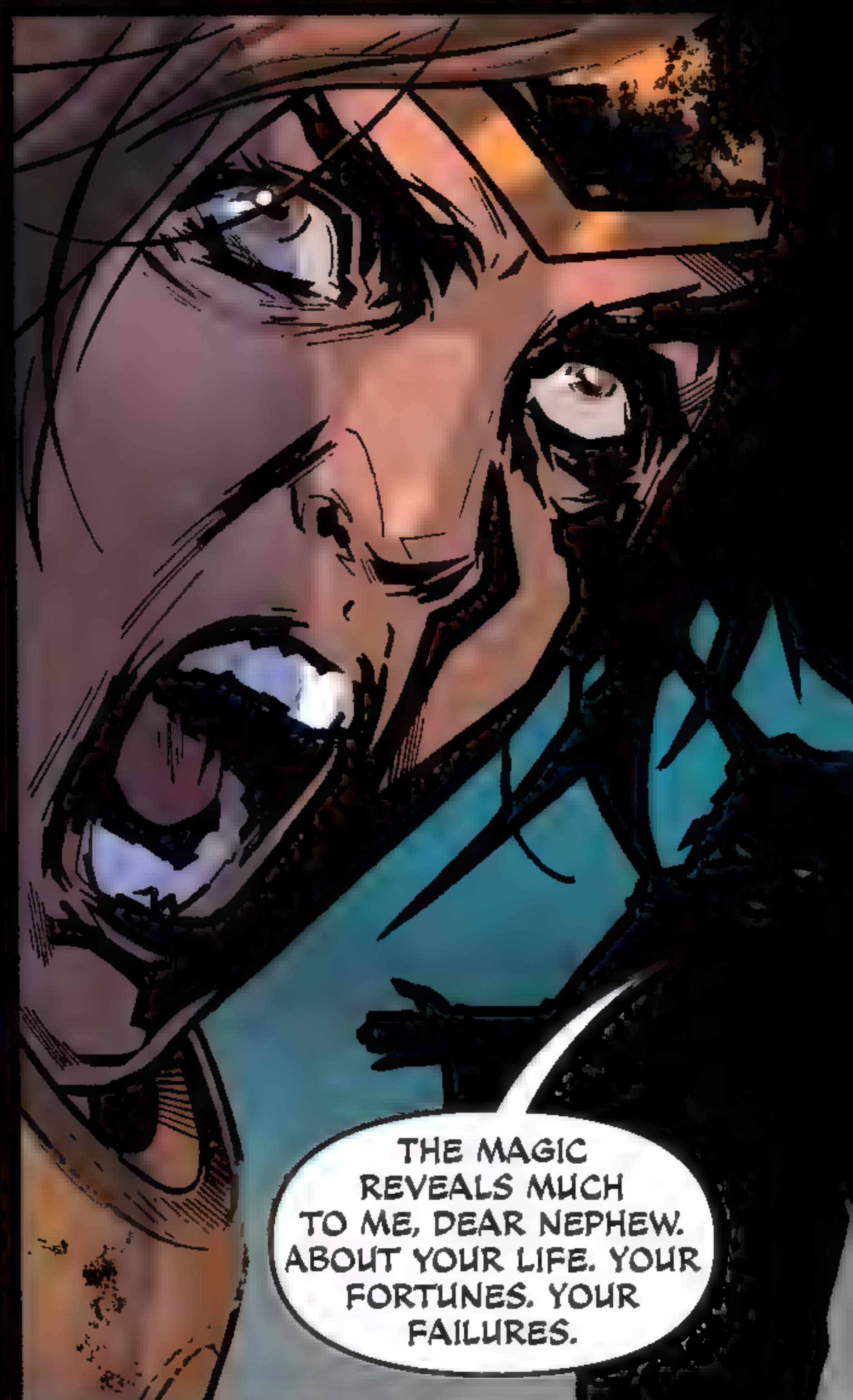


BUT, IT WAS
YOU WHO SHOWED
THEM THE WAY. YOU
WHO OPENED
THE DOOR.

WHEN A
KING BETRAYS
HIS KINGDOM,
HE BETRAYS
HIMSELF.



HOW DO
YOU KNOW
THAT?



THE MAGIC
REVEALS MUCH
TO ME, DEAR NEPHEW.
ABOUT YOUR LIFE. YOUR
FORTUNES. YOUR
FAILURES.





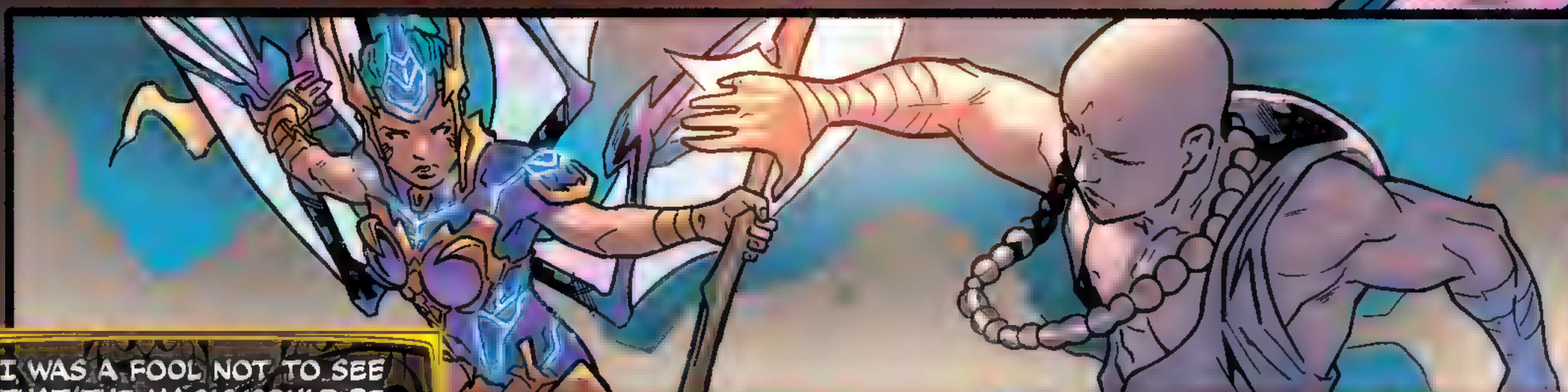
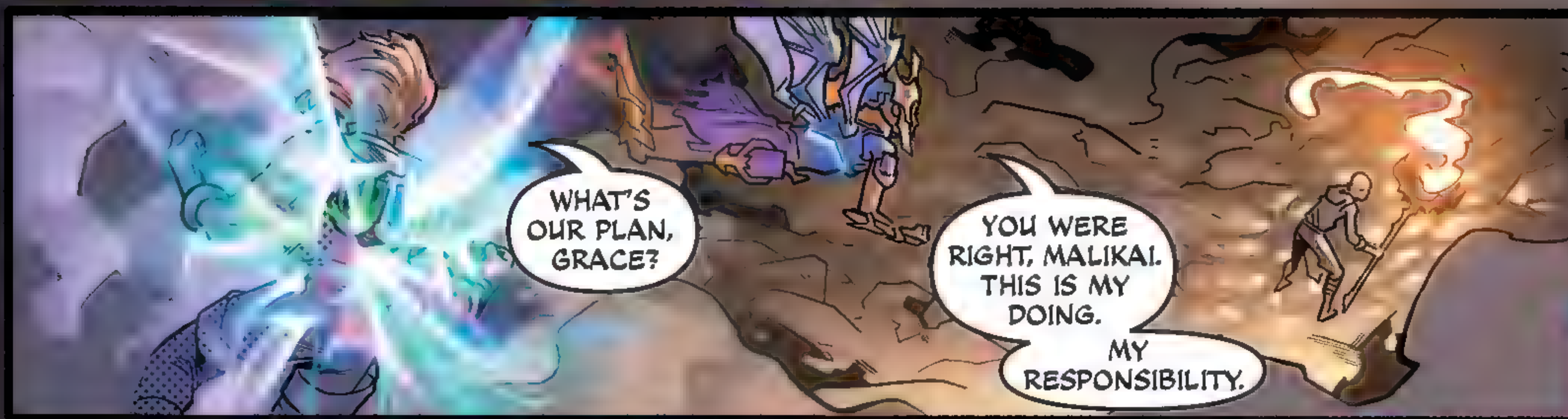
IT'S TIME
TO END THIS,
ONYX. BEFORE
THEY DESTROY
THE ENTIRE
REALM.

WHY? THAT'S
WHAT THEY ARE
HERE FOR. NOT
TO PROTECT
YOU. NOT TO
SAVE YOU.

WE HAVE
NO REALM.
NEITHER DO
THEY. IT ALL
BELONGS
TO THEM.

THIS IS
THEIR WORLD
NOW.

THE HELL
IT IS.



I WAS A FOOL NOT TO SEE THAT THE MAGIC COULD BE JUST AS EVIL AS GOOD. THAT THERE COULD BE TWO SIDES TO ITS ENERGY. OR RATHER, NO SIDES. JUST RAW POWER.



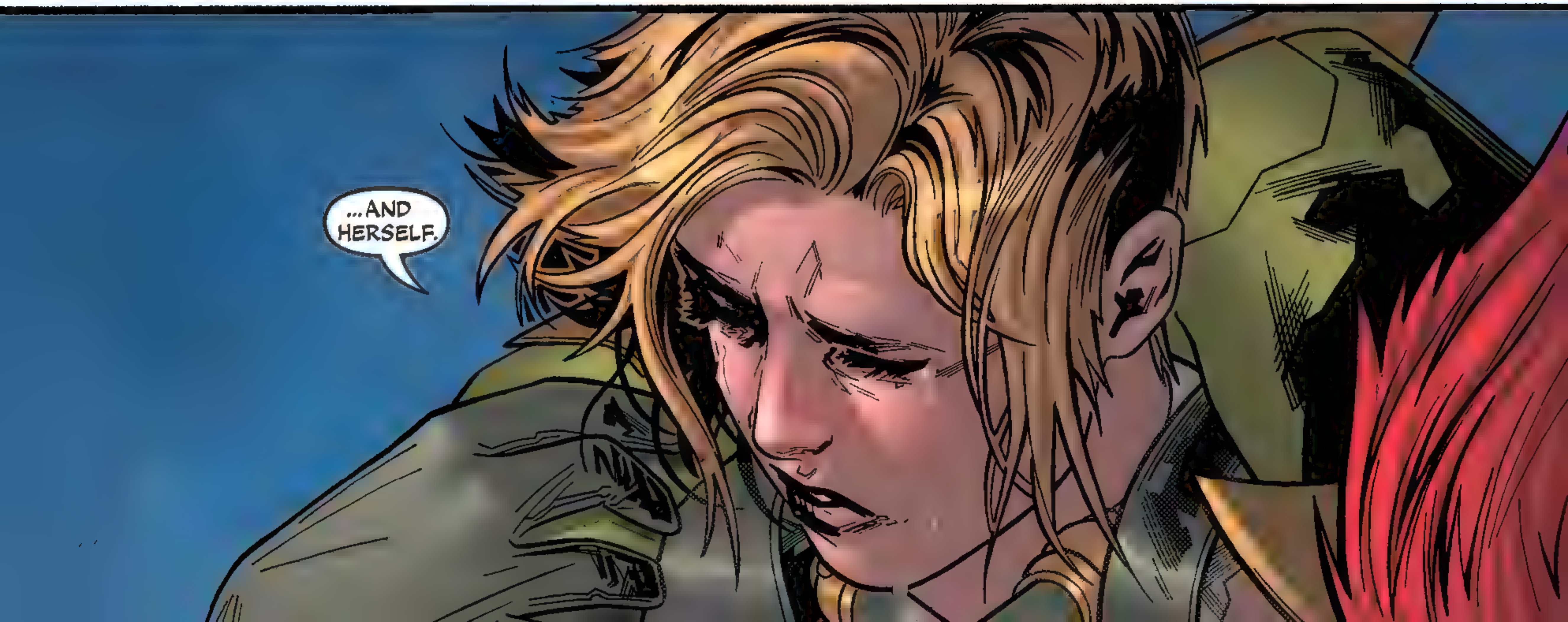
THERE MAY BE ONLY ONE WAY TO RETURN THESE DEMONS BACK TO THEIR WORLD.



ONE PRICE TO PAY.



АННННННН!



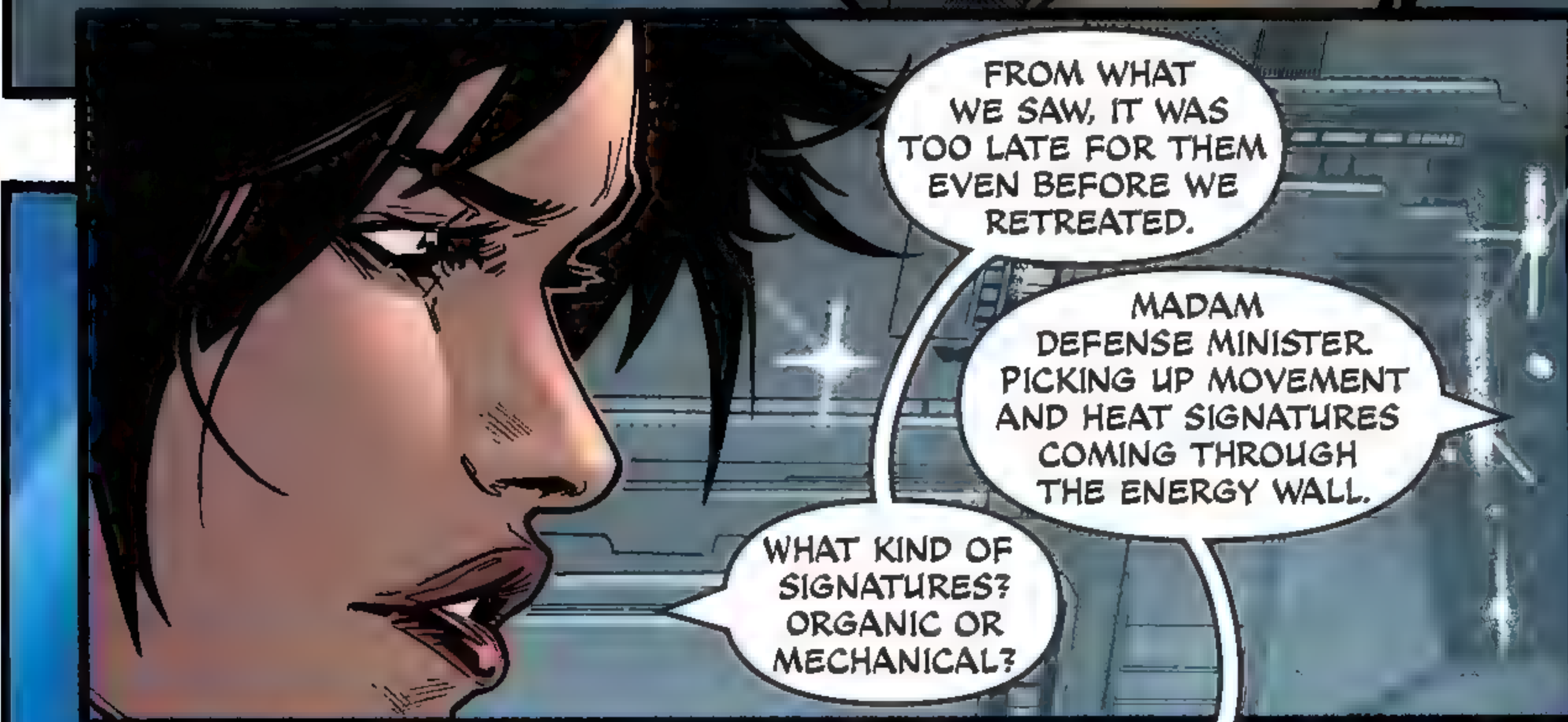


THE ENERGY SURGE CAUSED A MASSIVE EXPLOSION. DECIMATING THE PORTAL AREA.



LOOKS LIKE WE PULLED BACK JUST IN TIME.

FOR US. WHAT ABOUT THE REST?



FROM WHAT WE SAW, IT WAS TOO LATE FOR THEM EVEN BEFORE WE RETREATED.

MADAM DEFENSE MINISTER. PICKING UP MOVEMENT AND HEAT SIGNATURES COMING THROUGH THE ENERGY WALL.

WHAT KIND OF SIGNATURES? ORGANIC OR MECHANICAL?

BOTH.



SARIN MAY HAVE BEEN
A KING, BUT HE WASN'T
MUCH OF A LEADER.

DID HE DESERVE
TO DIE? WHO
IS TO SAY?

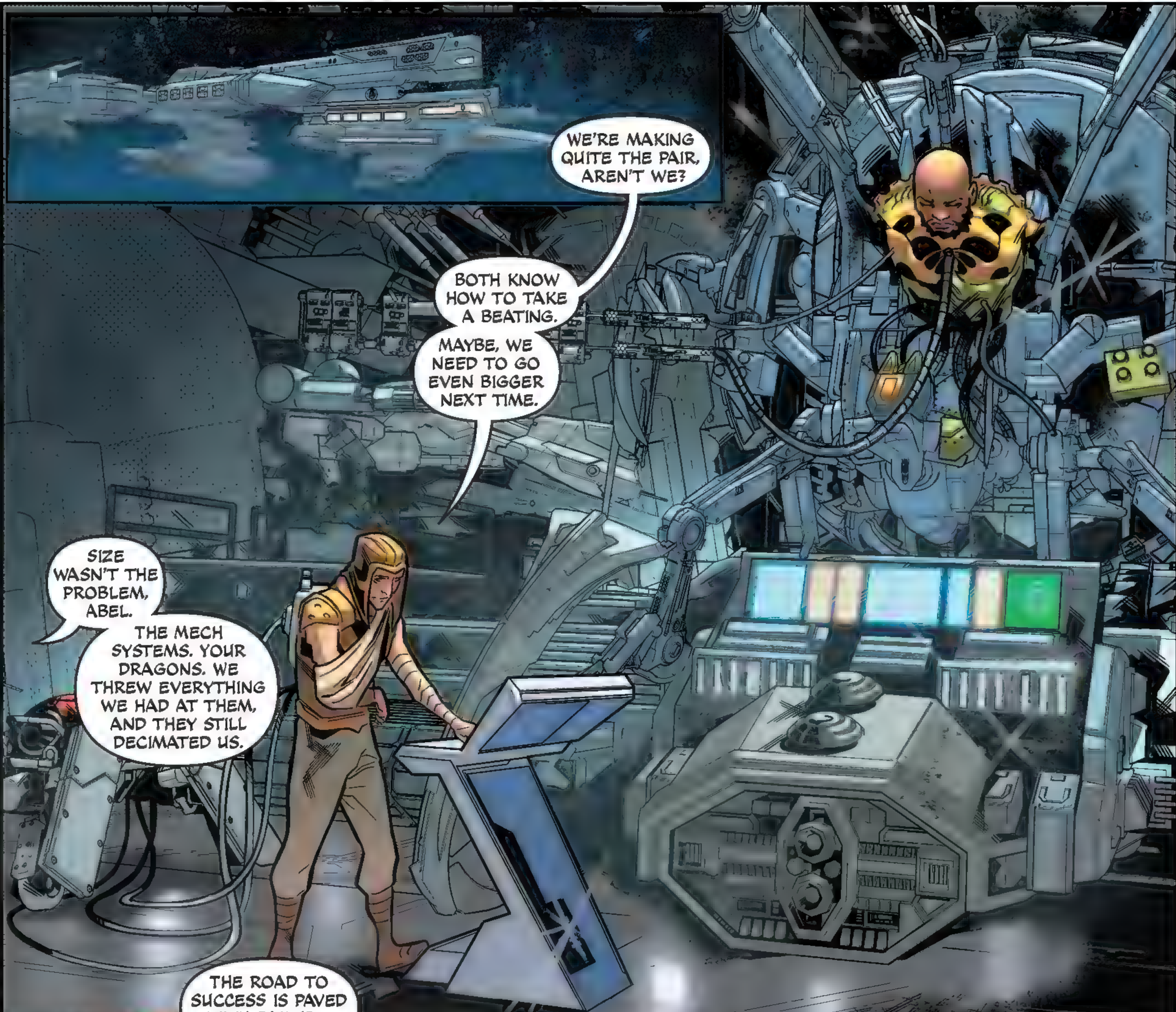
WHO IS TO SAY
WHAT ANY OF
US DESERVE?

HE REVELED
IN HIS ROLE AS
KING. DRINKING
FROM ITS POWER.

FOR ME, THE THRONE
IS A BURDEN. ONE I
NEVER ASKED FOR.

AND NOW, I WILL HAVE
TO FILL BOTH SEATS, IF
THERE IS TO BE ANY HOPE
OF KEEPING THIS KINGDOM
UNITED AND SAFE.

BECAUSE, I CANNOT
HELP THINK THAT THIS
BATTLE WAS JUST THE
BEGINNING OF SOME
FAR GREATER CONFLICT.



WE'RE MAKING
QUITE THE PAIR,
AREN'T WE?

BOTH KNOW
HOW TO TAKE
A BEATING.

MAYBE, WE
NEED TO GO
EVEN BIGGER
NEXT TIME.

SIZE
WASN'T THE
PROBLEM,
ABEL.

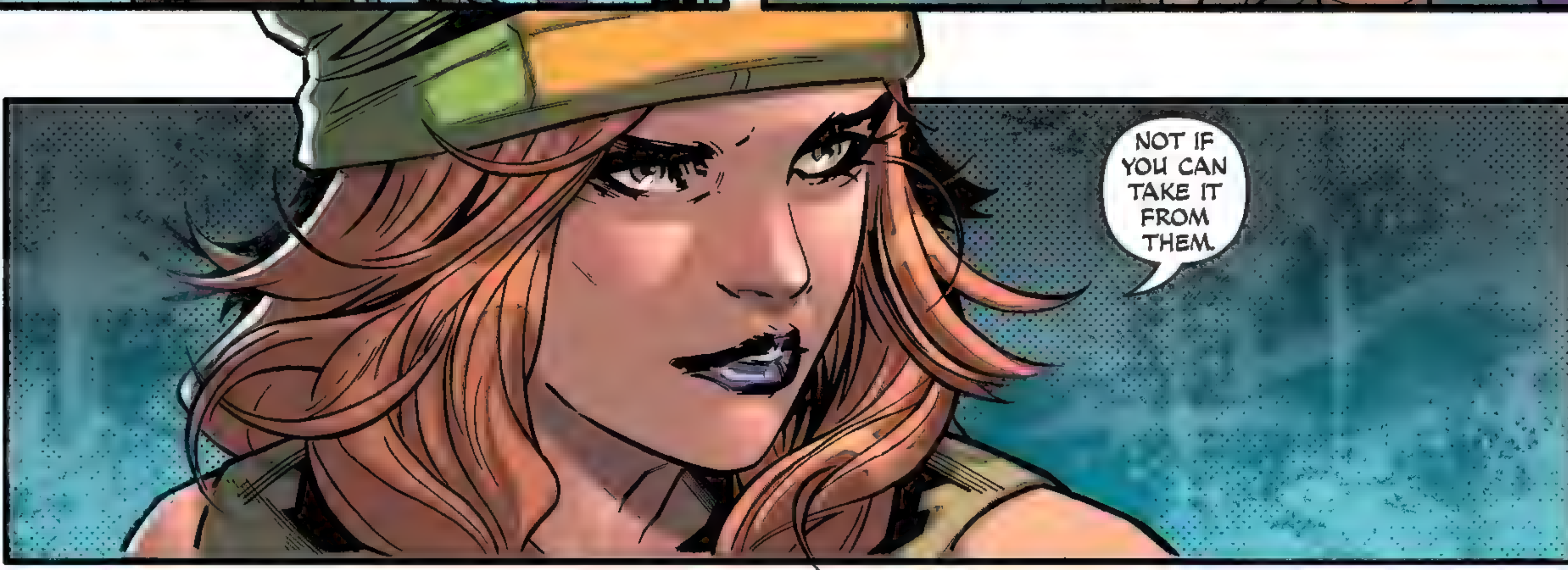
THE MECH
SYSTEMS. YOUR
DRAGONS. WE
THREW EVERYTHING
WE HAD AT THEM,
AND THEY STILL
DECIMATED US.

THE ROAD TO
SUCCESS IS PAVED
WITH FAILURE,
CORDELLA.

I'M NOT
ADMITTING DEFEAT,
BUT IT'S HARD FOR
ME TO SEE NEXT TIME
BEING ANY DIFFERENT. THEY
SIMPLY HAVE TOO MUCH
POWER. WE CAN'T
MATCH IT.



MAYBE, YOU
DON'T HAVE TO
MATCH IT.



NOT IF
YOU CAN
TAKE IT
FROM
THEM.



I AM SORRY, VANYSS. I KNOW YOU CARED FOR GRACE. SHE WAS A STRONG WARRIOR.

SHE WAS MORE THAN THAT TO ME, RAINIER. SHE WAS SPECIAL. IN MANY WAYS, SHE WAS THE MAGIC.

AS WAS THE EVERLANDS. AND I WONDER IF WE SHOULD HAVE STAYED THERE INSTEAD OF RETURNING BACK HERE.

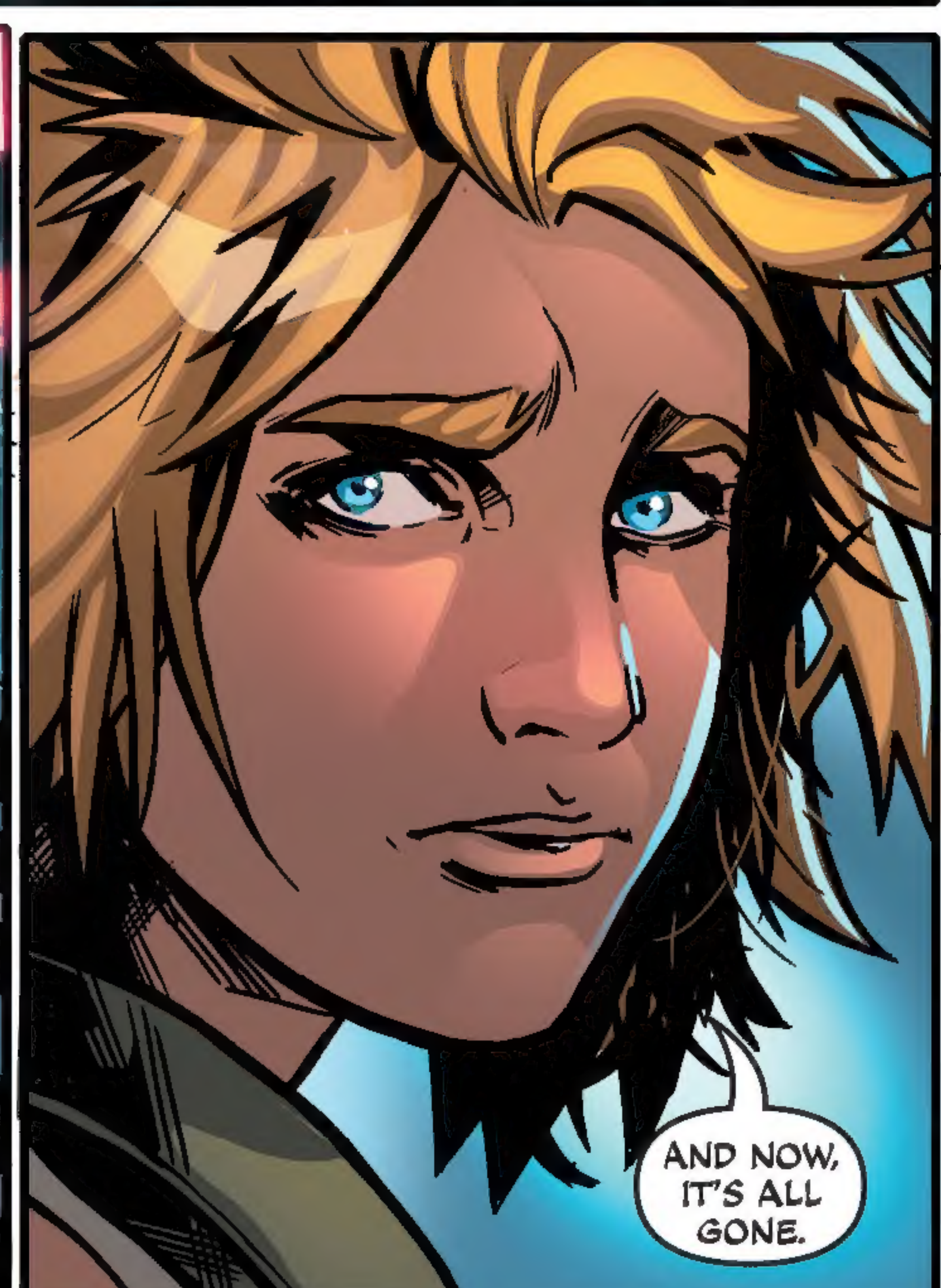
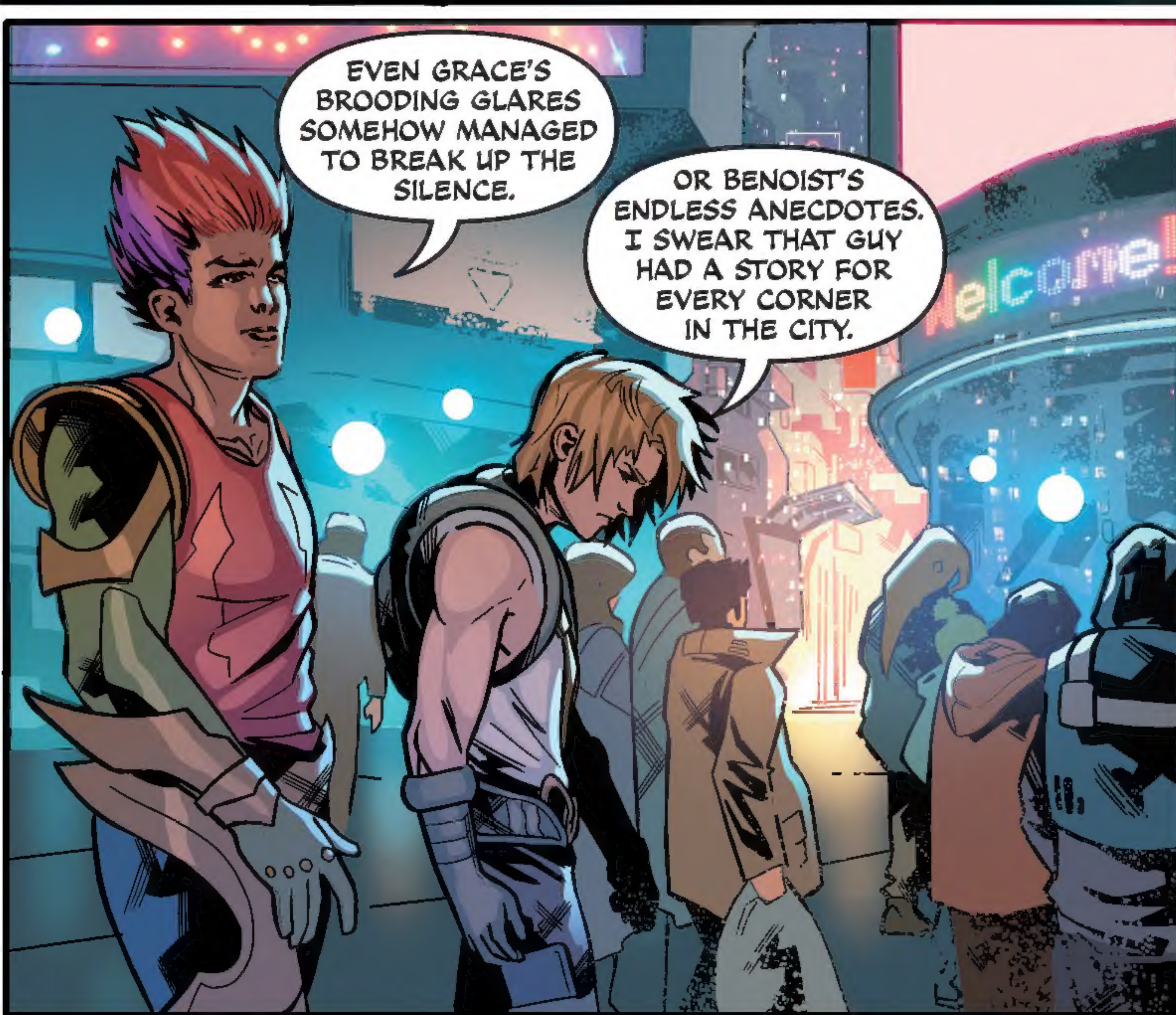
ARE YOU SCARED? THAT THEY'LL COME AFTER US AGAIN?

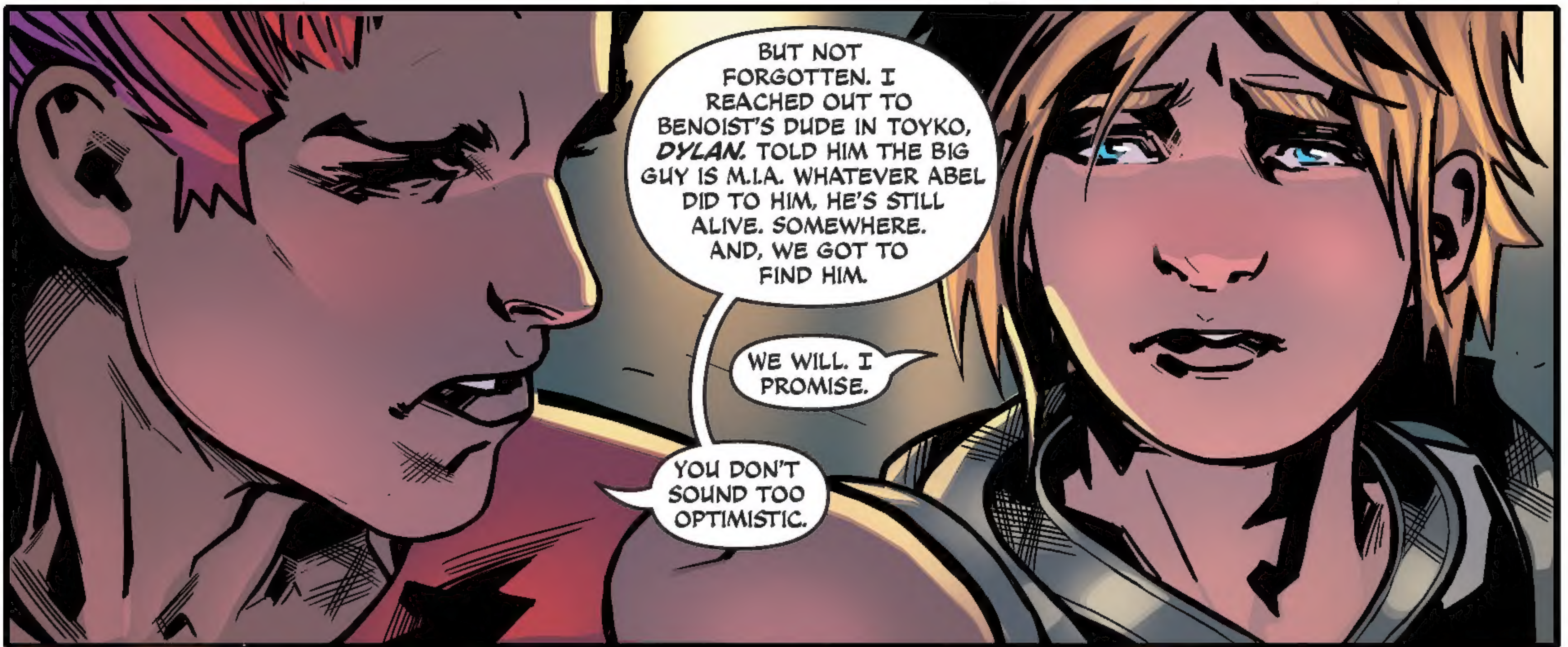
I AM. THIS WAR DOESN'T FEEL OVER.

IT'S NEVER OVER. THIS FIGHT HAS BEEN GOING ON SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME. IT'S NOT EVEN A WAR. IT'S JUST SURVIVAL.

BESIDES, WE MAY HAVE LEFT THE EVERLANDS...

... BUT, WE BROUGHT SOME OF IT WITH US.





BUT NOT FORGOTTEN. I REACHED OUT TO BENOIST'S DUDE IN TOYKO, DYLAN. TOLD HIM THE BIG GUY IS M.I.A. WHATEVER ABEL DID TO HIM, HE'S STILL ALIVE. SOMEWHERE. AND, WE GOT TO FIND HIM.

WE WILL. I PROMISE.

YOU DON'T SOUND TOO OPTIMISTIC.



IT'S NOT THAT, P.J.

IT'S GRACE. SHE MESSED UP BIG TIME, AND SHE PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE FOR IT.

BUT, SHE WAS THE ONE WHO OPENED MY EYES TO THE MAGIC OF THE WORLD IN THE FIRST PLACE. I MAY HAVE BEEN DESTINED FOR IT REGARDLESS, BUT ALL THIS TIME, I'VE NEVER KNOWN OF A WORLD OF MAGIC THAT DIDN'T INCLUDE HER.



I KNOW I HAD MY ROLE TO PLAY, BUT AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, SHE WAS THE CENTER OF IT ALL. THE HEART OF THE MAGIC.

SHE WAS ITS PROTECTOR. WAS THAT WAY FOR CENTURIES. AND, I GUESS I'M JUST WONDERING WHAT THINGS WILL BE LIKE NOW.



A WORLD WITHOUT GRACE.

